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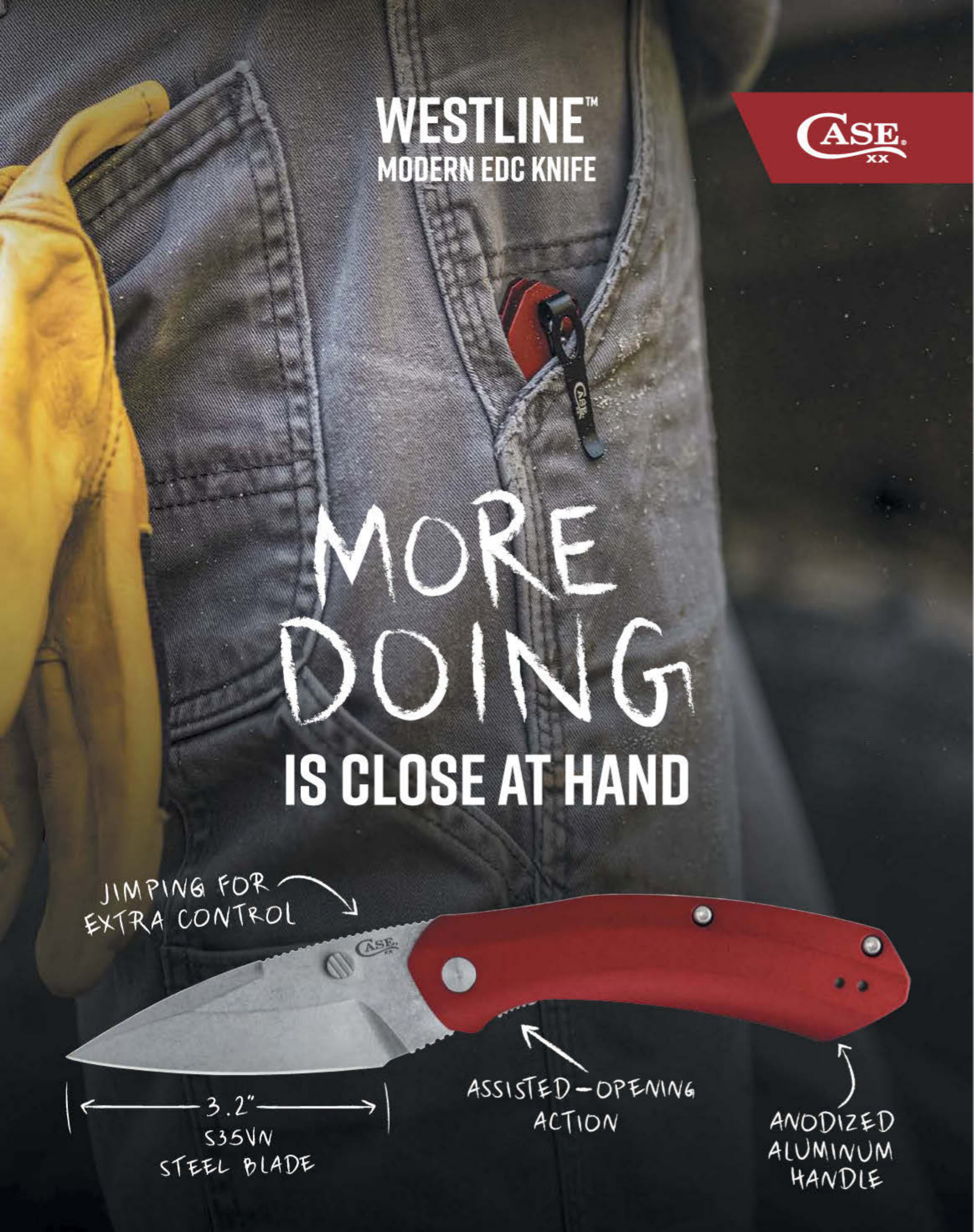
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ALL BY YOURSELF

"See, you did it all by yourself."

We've said that many times to our kids to voice our pride and boost their confidence as they've reached milestones in their growth, whether it was the first time they tied their shoes or rode a bike without us racing along holding on to the back of the seat.

As adults, part of the allure of knives, I think, is that they are tools that give us the ability to handle little jobs that, in turn, give us the confidence to tackle life's bigger challenges. Whether it's something as simple as opening a package or cutting a string, knives provide us with a certain satisfaction in knowing that we're capable and handy, that we can accomplish useful things all by ourselves.

In this issue, we have a special section we've dubbed "The Camp Kitchen." The word "camp" can call to mind different things to different people. You might think of that cabin in the woods or on the lakeshore that your family has owned for several generations. You might recall a summer rental on the outskirts of a tourist town where you spend a couple of weeks on your vacation last year.

For still others, camp might mean the site in a campground where you level that luxurious recreational vehicle with all the comforts of home that you hauled many miles just so your family and your dog could enjoy the great outdoors without having to endure the idea of roughing it. More often for me, camp has been the place where I set up a tent or drop my backpack.

Above: A Qvien tripod plate with chain provides an easy way to rig a tripod to hang a cook pot as part of a simple camp kitchen.

No matter how you define it, whenever and wherever you set up temporary housekeeping away from home, you're going to address not just the sleeping situation, but meals as well. That will necessitate having knives on hand.

Slicing open food packages, chopping veggies and cutting chunks of meat is only part of the work requiring a sharp edge or two. The more simply you decide to camp, the more need you'll have for knives. I've often needed to make use of a blade's ability to turn raw materials around me into something useful, something that I needed to improvise in camp. At times, I've needed to rig a tripod or crossbar support for a kettle over my campfire or fashion a grid of green sticks as a makeshift grill.

I've hung a tarp over my camp kitchen in the rain, cutting poles and stakes to do so. I've shaved wood as tinder to light my hobo stove to cook hot chocolate for the kids and my wife, who's always cold when we're camping. I can do such things with a knife, and I say with just a small sense of accomplishment that I can do them all by myself.

Steven Paul Barlow
Editor

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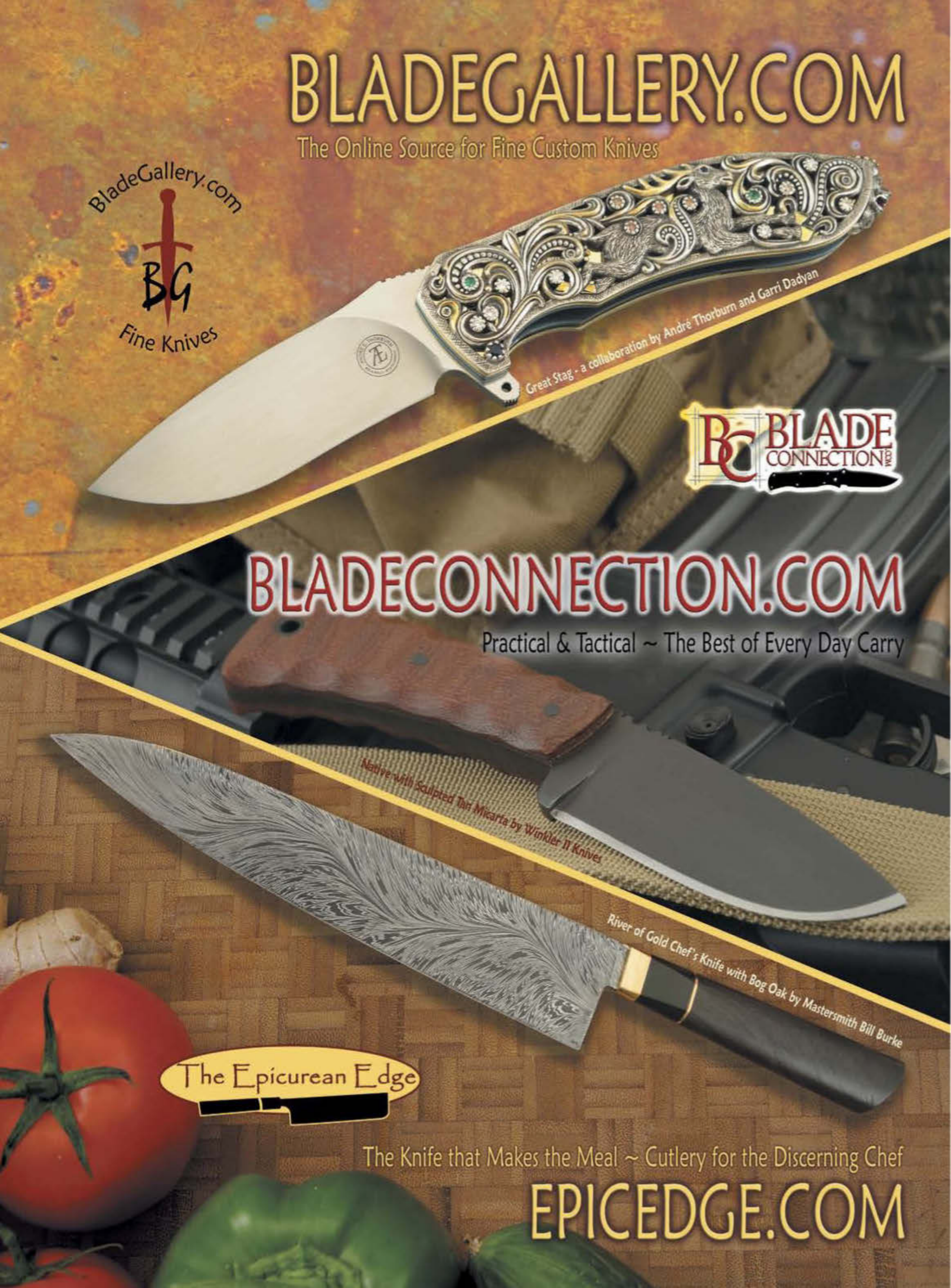

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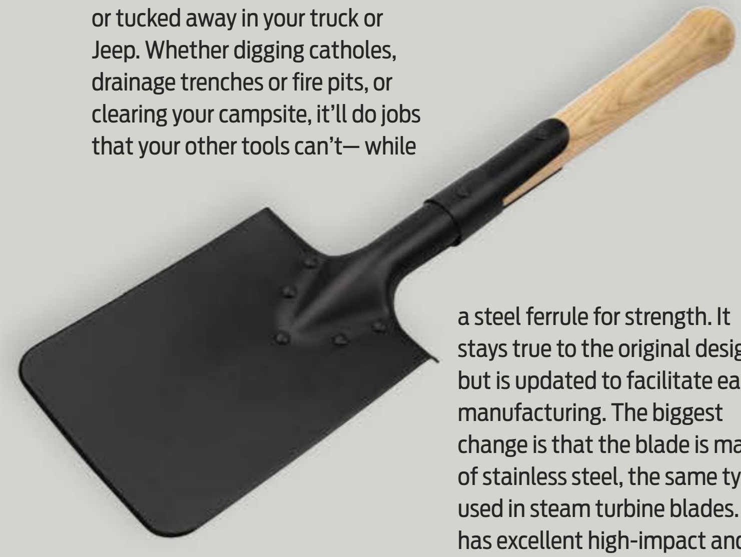
HANDY TOOLS FOR CAR AND CAMP

STORY BY TIM STETZER, PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURERS

1. Boker Plus Shovel M1874

I know knives, axes, and even machetes are probably sexier tools, but a good shovel is an invaluable tool around camp or tucked away in your truck or Jeep. Whether digging catholes, drainage trenches or fire pits, or clearing your campsite, it'll do jobs that your other tools can't— while still doing a lot of the chopping and cutting that they can. I've tried all sorts of folding shovels, and have a good bit of time spent with a military tri-fold entrenching tool, but I always come back to a fixed-handle shovel. The old military styles with the wooden handle are my preference, as the straight handles also let you use the shovel edges like an axe or machete to chop roots and branches, clear out weeds, and even use as a boat paddle in a pinch.



The folks at Boker must have similar preferences to mine because they just released the Boker Plus Shovel M1874. This is an accurate reissue of the original Imperial German field spade of 1874. That shovel was originally made for infantry and hunter battalions and went on to serve through two world wars. It uses an ash wood handle fitted with a steel ferrule for strength. It stays true to the original design but is updated to facilitate easier manufacturing. The biggest change is that the blade is made of stainless steel, the same type used in steam turbine blades. It has excellent high-impact and shock-resistant characteristics and is easy to sharpen in the field so you can keep your edges tuned up for chopping.

The M1874 comes with a moisture-resistant, rot-proof black nylon sheath equipped with a firm plastic insert. The proven century-and-a-half-old design, updated with modern materials, makes for a great tool for bushcrafters, campers, off-roaders, and outdoorsmen of all stripes.

< SPECS:

Boker Plus Shovel M1874

- **Overall Length:** 20.87 inches
- **Blade Length:** 7.48 inches
- **Blade Thickness:** 0.08 inch
- **Weight:** 33.09 ounces
- **Blade Material:** 2Cr13
- **Handle Material:** Ash wood
- **Origin:** Asia
- **Color:** Black
- **MSRP:** $87.45
- **BokerUSA.com**

2. CRKT Taco Viper

The Taco Viper is the latest release from CRKT's Forged by War Program, which highlights military-veteran designers. Antonio Rodriguez came up with the Taco Viper based on his experience in the 82nd Airborne division. The Taco is an assisted-opening flipper that blends the ruggedness of a field knife with the portably of an EDC tool.

The Taco Viper has a good-sized 4.2-inch blade of 1.4116 stainless steel with Veff serrations and uses a liner lock mechanism. Handles are glass-reinforced nylon that are fitted with a low-profile pocket clip. There's an optional sheath available if you need the extra security or want to attach it to your belt or gear.

If you're looking for a big, fast-opening, duty-worthy folder, then the Taco Viper is one to check out.

< SPECS:

CRKT Taco Viper

- **Blade Style:** Assisted-opening folder with liner lock
- **Blade Length:** 4.22 inches
- **Blade Material:** 1.4116 stainless steel
- **Blade Finish:** Stonewash
- **Handle Material:** Glass-reinforced nylon
- **Lock and Operating Mechanism:** Assisted opening/liner lock
- **Weight:** 5.2 ounces
- **Closed Length:** 5.62 inches
- **Overall Length:** 9.84 inches
- **Special Features:** Drop-point blade with Veff serrations
- **MSRP:** $135
- **CRKT.com**

3. KA-BAR Ek Commando Short Drop and Clip Points

Ek Knives date back to 1941 and have been carried by generations of American soldiers in the field. The brand's simple, rugged designs have survived the test of time. KA-BAR of Olean, New York, is the current custodian of the Ek brand, and it's only fitting that one cutlery legend carries on the legacy of another.

In addition to continuing the traditional Ek designs, KA-BAR has released two slightly smaller designs geared more towards general field and utility use. The EK50 Commando Short Clip Point and EK51 Commando Short Drop Point use blades of 1095 Cro-Van carbon steel with polymer Ultramid handle scales. The EK50 has a 5-inch clip-point blade, and the EK51 has a 4.3-inch drop-point blade. Both knives are made in the USA with German steel and come with U.S.-made, MOLLE-compatible sheaths.

Whether you're active military and just want a more compact knife for your gear, or a hunter or outdoorsman who appreciates the history and proven Ek designs, then the American-made Ek knives from KA-BAR are worth a look.

< SPECS:

Ek Commando Short Clip Point

- **Item Number:** EK50
- **Overall Length:** 9.25 inches
- **Blade Length:** 5.0625 inches
- **Blade Width:** 1.3125 inches
- **Blade Shape:** Clip point
- **Blade Stamp:** KA-BAR/Ek Commando
- **Steel:** 1095-CroVan
- **Thickness:** 0.165 inch
- **Grind:** Flat
- **HRC:** 56-58
- **Handle Material:** Ultramid
- **Weight:** 0.65 pound
- **Origin:** USA
- **MSRP:** $154.04
- **KABAR.com**

Ek Commando Short Drop Point

- **Item Number:** EK51
- **Overall Length:** 8.5 inches
- **Blade Length:** 4.3125 inches
- **Blade Width:** 1.25 inches
- **Blade Shape:** Drop point
- **Blade Stamp:** KA-BAR/Ek Commando
- **Steel:** 1095-CroVan
- **Thickness:** 0.165 inch
- **Grind:** Flat
- **HRC:** 56-58
- **Handle Material:** Ultramid
- **Sheath:** EK51s
- **Weight:** 0.6 pound
- **Origin:** USA
- **MRSP:** $154.04
- **KABAR.com**

4. Gerber Center-Drive Custom

Gerber has long been one of the driving forces behind multitools, and now the company is taking things a step further: It's allowing the end user to make the popular Center-Drive design their own way. Gerber's Custom Center-Drive program offers customers nine color options, along with a variety of laser engraving options so that you can build a one-of-a-kind tool. You can also choose from four different tool packs to pick the best setup for your needs. A tool pack includes the classic Center-Drive tools including scissor, file, awl and pry tool, or the updated Center-Drive Plus tool pack with blade, file, awl and pry tool. You can get either pack in satin or black finishes. The Center-Drive Custom starts at $155, plus a $10 customization fee. That price includes your custom tool, an interchangeable bit set, and either a leather or nylon sheath.

SOURCE

Gerber Gear
GerberGear.com

5. Streamlight ProTac 2.0 Tactical Light

I've been using Streamlights for around 40 years now, from my time in Boy Scouts, through my military and police careers, around the house and while camping, so whenever the company releases a new design, I pay attention. One of its latest offerings is the 2,000-lumen ProTac 2.0, a compact, high-performance, hand-held, rechargeable tactical light.

The ProTac 2.0 uses the new Streamlight SL-B50 battery pack that charges directly via an integrated USB-C port. No separate chargers required, and if you're already using a USB-C cable for your phone, you can use the same setup for your light. An LED status light shows red for charging and green when you're fully charged.

It has High, Medium and Low modes that put out 2,000 lumens, 570 lumens, and 100 lumens, respectively. Run-times range from an impressive 25 hours on Low to 2.5 hours on High. There's also a strobe option with a 4-hour-and-25-minute run-time. Considering the old days of 60-lumen tac lights with an hour run-time off of two expensive CR123 batteries, this is pretty powerful stuff. **KI**

SPECS: >

Streamlight ProTac 2.0 Tactical Light

- **High Lumens:** 2,000
- **Run-Time on High:** 2.5 hours
- **Run-Time on Low:** 25 hours
- **Beam Distance:** 262 meters
- **Max Candela:** 17,300
- **Battery Type:** Streamlight SL-B50 Protected Li-Ion USB Rechargeable Battery Pack
- **Battery Quantity:** 1
- **Length:** 6.10 inches
- **Weight:** 8.25 ounces
- **Colors:** Black
- **MSRP:** $195
- **Streamlight.com**

STREAMLIGHT
SL-B50
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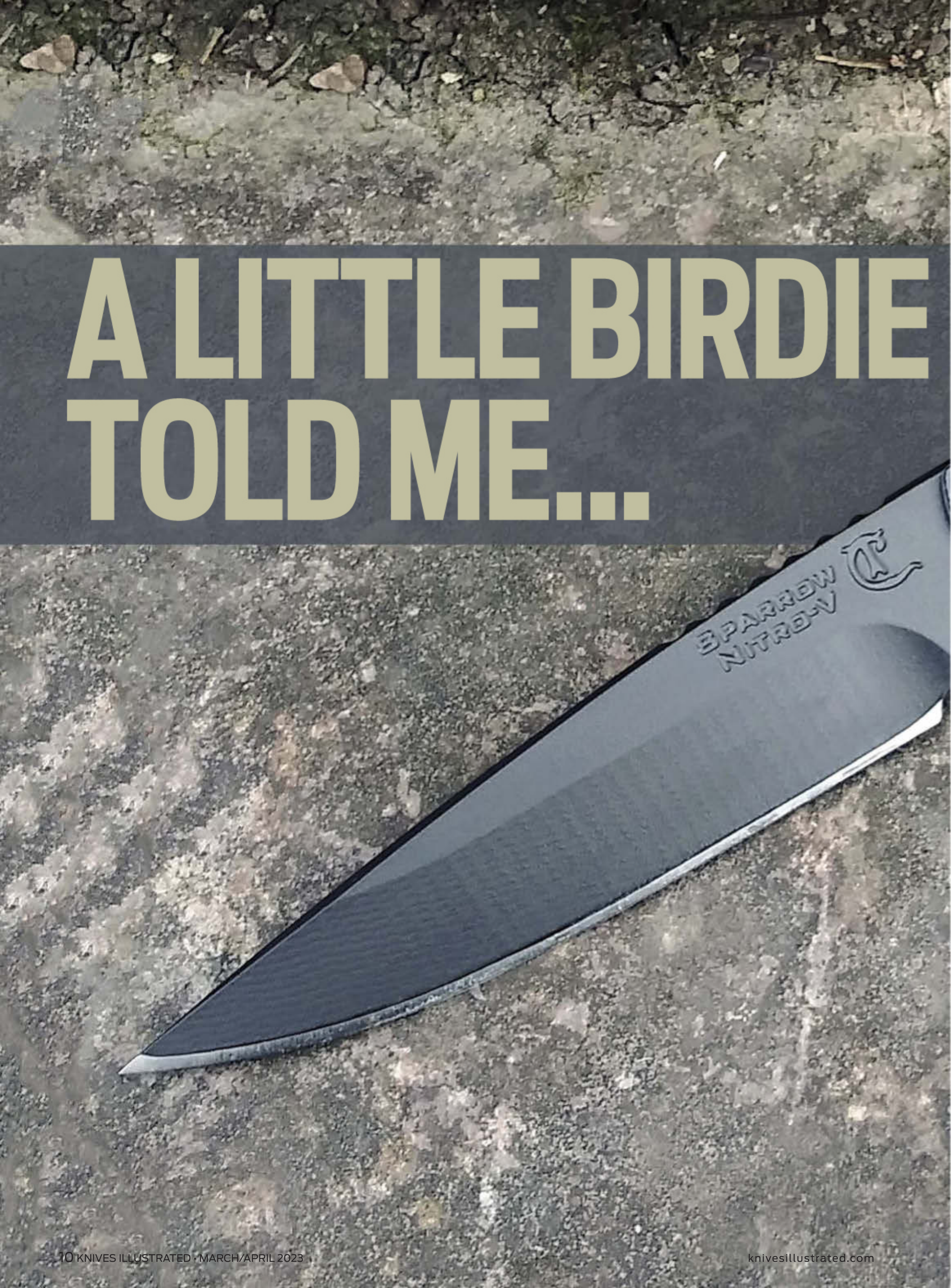
ProTac 2.0

A LITTLE BIRDIE TOLD ME...


SPARROW
NITRO-V

...TO CHECK OUT THE SPARROW FROM RMJ TACTICAL

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY JIM COBB

Have you ever spotted a knife, say in a catalog or on a website, and you just can't get it out of your head? Maybe it's the blade profile that catches your eye. Or the handle is shaped just right and seems perfect for your hand. Whatever it is, that knife is never far from your mind.

That's what happened to me the first time I came across the Sparrow. I stumbled upon it while searching for something else and knew in an instant I had to get my hands on one. However, as is all too often the case when it comes to being a knife collector, my wants at the time exceeded the size of my wallet. So, I had to bide my time for a bit until the knife budget had been sufficiently replenished. Contrary to popular belief, we knife reviewers aren't all independently wealthy, y'know.

The Sparrow was definitely worth the wait. On its website, RMJ Tactical describes the Sparrow as being a compact bird- and trout-style knife. As the kids like to say, or maybe they used to say it (I can't keep track anymore), bird and trout knives are my jam. I've found that many of them make for excellent EDC knives.

SPARROW
NITRO-V

SMALL, SLEEK AND SHARP

Drawing the Sparrow from the sheath, I was immediately impressed with the balance. This is a lightweight knife, a bit more than a couple of ounces. It has just enough heft to let you know there's something in your grip. The blade is slightly longer than the handle, but the balance point is right at the finger choil, so it doesn't feel top-heavy.

While I'm very fond of smaller fixed-blade knives, I'm not much of a fan of handles that only allow for a three-finger grip. They often feel lost in my hand and, as a result, are awkward to use. That proved not to be the case with the Sparrow. The knife was quite comfortable in a variety of grips.

The blade is a classic drop-point profile, which is one of the single most useful blade shapes out there. It is suitable for an enormous range of duties, from processing game and food prep to cutting open packages and slicing cordage. It has a Tungsten Cerakote coating, giving the knife a sleek appearance. Honestly, though, this is about the only thing I didn't care for with the Sparrow. I don't generally like blade coatings and prefer the steel to be raw or naked. However, this absolutely is just a matter of personal preference and in no way is a slight against the knife or its quality.

The tip of the Sparrow's blade is the sharpest needlepoint I've ever had on a knife. Don't get me wrong, the blade's edge is a razor, but the point is exceptionally sharp.

> “THE TIP OF THE SPARROW'S BLADE IS THE SHARPEST NEEDLEPOINT I'VE EVER HAD ON A KNIFE.”

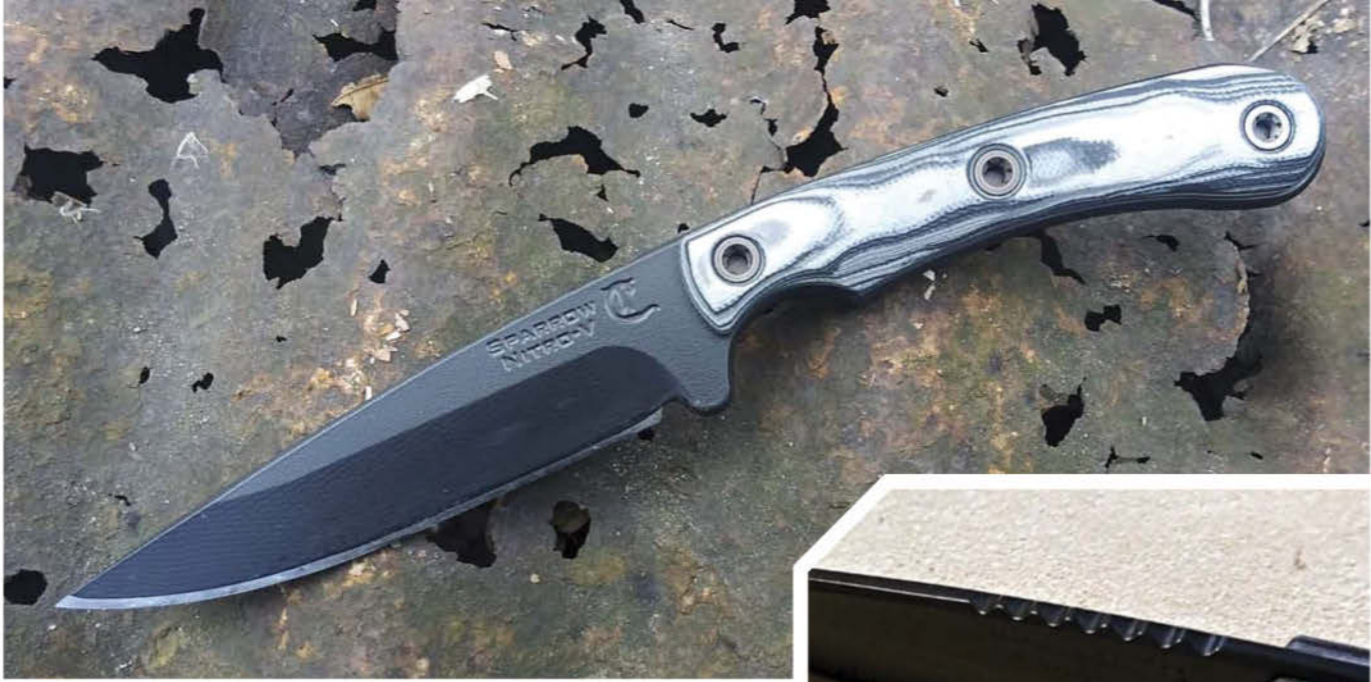
There's a small section of jimping on the spine. Opposite the jimping is a bit of a guard, just ahead of the choil. The knife has a gentle curve running from the tip of the blade to the end of the handle.

The Sparrow is made from Nitro-V steel. This is new-to-me steel, but research indicates it is similar to AEB-L in many ways. I have a few knives in AEB-L and have been very happy with how that steel performs, so I expect that Nitro-V is a good choice here. It is a tough steel, ranking a bit higher in that regard than Elmax and S35VN.

Top, Left: The Urban Camo pattern for the G10 scales is reminiscent of snakeskin.

Top, Right: The integral guard rests just ahead of the finger choil. The choil also happens to be the balance point for this knife.

Center, Left: Two straps on the Kydex sheath allow for a range of carry styles.



> “[THE SPARROW] IS ABSOLUTELY A WEAPON, NO QUESTION ABOUT IT, BUT IT’S A WEAPON THAT HAS PLENTY OF OTHER USES.”

Nitro-V hit the market in 2017, so it is a relative newcomer to the scene.

The handle scales on this model are G10 in what they’ve called an urban camo color pattern. The Sparrow is available in a few other color configurations, including green and brown. A touch of texture is on the scales, nothing overbearing or uncomfortable, just enough to feel it’s there. There is no lanyard attachment point on the handle of the knife.

The Sparrow comes with a molded Kydex sheath equipped with two MAD straps. It is set up for horizontal or Scout carry or inside the waistband (IWB) vertical carry. It is MOLLE-compatible, and you could even attach it to PALS webbing, so you can carry it directly on a plate carrier or pack.

The knife locks in solidly to the sheath with absolutely no wiggle at all. Despite the range of carrying methods, I just carried it in my pocket most of the time. Even while keeping the straps attached, the overall package is small enough to do so without being overly bulky.

UNOBTRUSIVE BUT EFFECTIVE

One of the things I look for in an EDC knife is it being large enough to be truly useful, but small enough that nobody calls in a SWAT team when they see me using it. In that regard, the Sparrow is right up my alley. While the Kydex sheath does give it something of a tactical look, most people aren’t even going to notice it, given the small footprint it has on a belt.

While I have zero intention of ever deploying this, or any other knife for that matter, against another person (as when it comes to self-defense that’s what firearms are for), I have little doubt that the Sparrow could inflict some very serious damage in that regard. It is absolutely a weapon, no question about it, but it’s a weapon that has plenty of other uses.

I found that the Sparrow particularly excels with food prep chores, making it a great

Top: The Sparrow has great lines and punches way above its weight class.

Right: Jimping on the spine runs for about an inch. It provides traction while not being overly rough or sharp.

Above: Here you can see the convenient thumb break on the sheath. This is always a nice feature for Kydex sheaths.

SOURCE

RMJ Tactical
RMJTactical.com

choice for those who are looking for an EDC blade that will help with lunch duty at work, slicing cheese, sausage and the like. As mentioned in the sidebar (right), a bird and trout knife isn't all that far removed from a typical paring knife, just perhaps a little more robust.

I also used the Sparrow to open and process countless boxes. Despite this being one of the most common chores for our knives, many users don't realize just how detrimental to a blade's edge the average cardboard box can be. The glue used in the manufacturing process to create corrugated cardboard dries rock hard. On top of that, factories aren't exactly known for being spotless environments. All manner of dirt and other debris will find its way into the cardboard. The upshot is that corrugated cardboard is actually an especially abrasive material. Despite this, the Sparrow's edge remained exceptionally keen even after quite a bit of use.

⊕ SPECS

RMJ TACTICAL SPARROW

Overall Length: 7.0 inches

Cutting Edge: 3.125 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.125 inch

Steel: Nitro-V

Weight: 2.3 ounces

MSRP: $200

FINAL ANALYSIS

While I could see the Sparrow faring well in a wilderness setting, I feel it is more suited for urban environments. The smaller, thinner handle lacks the grip necessary for comfortable carving and similar duties. It'd do in a pinch, but I'd rather have something a bit beefier for those chores.

That said, the Sparrow is a supremely well-thought-out knife that's perfect for EDC. It will handle just about any common knife use at work or at home and do it all without complaint or hesitation. It held an amazing edge throughout the review period and handled beautifully. If you're on the hunt for a do-it-all companion, you could do far worse than the Sparrow. **KI**

Above: The Sparrow works great in the kitchen, particularly when trimming veggies to pack for lunches.

Top, Left: It cut through numerous boxes like a laser, slicing them up into bits quite easily.

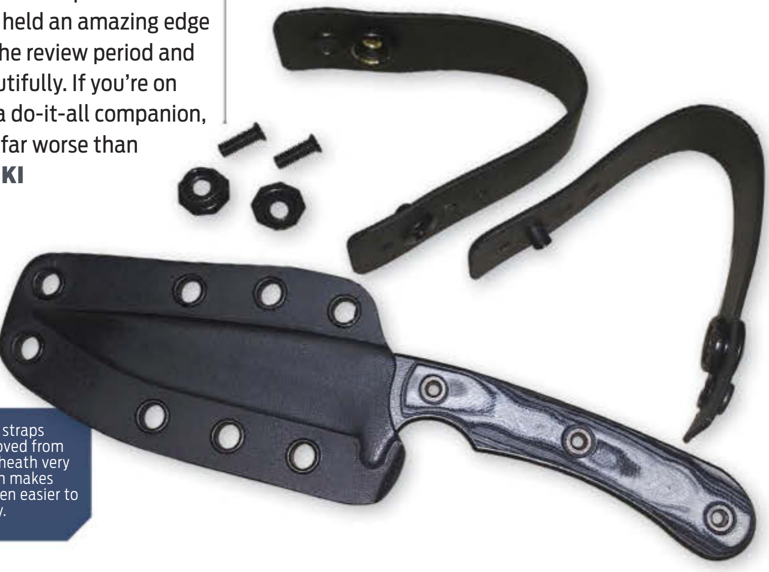
Top, Right: The Sparrow's blade is coated in Cerakote, which protects the steel and reduces glare.

WHAT IS A BIRD AND TROUT KNIFE?

Like with most traditional knife styles, what makes a knife a bird and trout knife is more along the lines of, "I know it when I see it." There aren't any set-in-stone requirements in terms of size or shape.

Generally speaking, the bird and trout knife is something small, with a blade running no more than a few inches in length. It will be lightweight, tipping the scales at just a few ounces. It's relatively thin and usually has a very sharp, piercing point. Honestly, if you grab a paring knife from the kitchen drawer, you're pretty close to a bird and trout knife.

Some models have a ring handle, so that the knife can dangle from the pinky finger when not in use and then easily rotate up into the palm as needed.



Right: The straps can be removed from the Kydex sheath very easily, which makes the knife even easier to pocket carry.

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ANNIVERSARY EDITION
HM
HB
0,6 1¼
MADE IN SWEDEN
HB
0,85 2
MADE IN SWEDEN
HULT

These Hults Bruk choppers can be handy anywhere from the backyard to the backwoods.

HEFTY HELPERS

TAKE YOUR PICK: EITHER OF THESE HATCHETS FROM HULTS BRUK CAN DO THE JOB

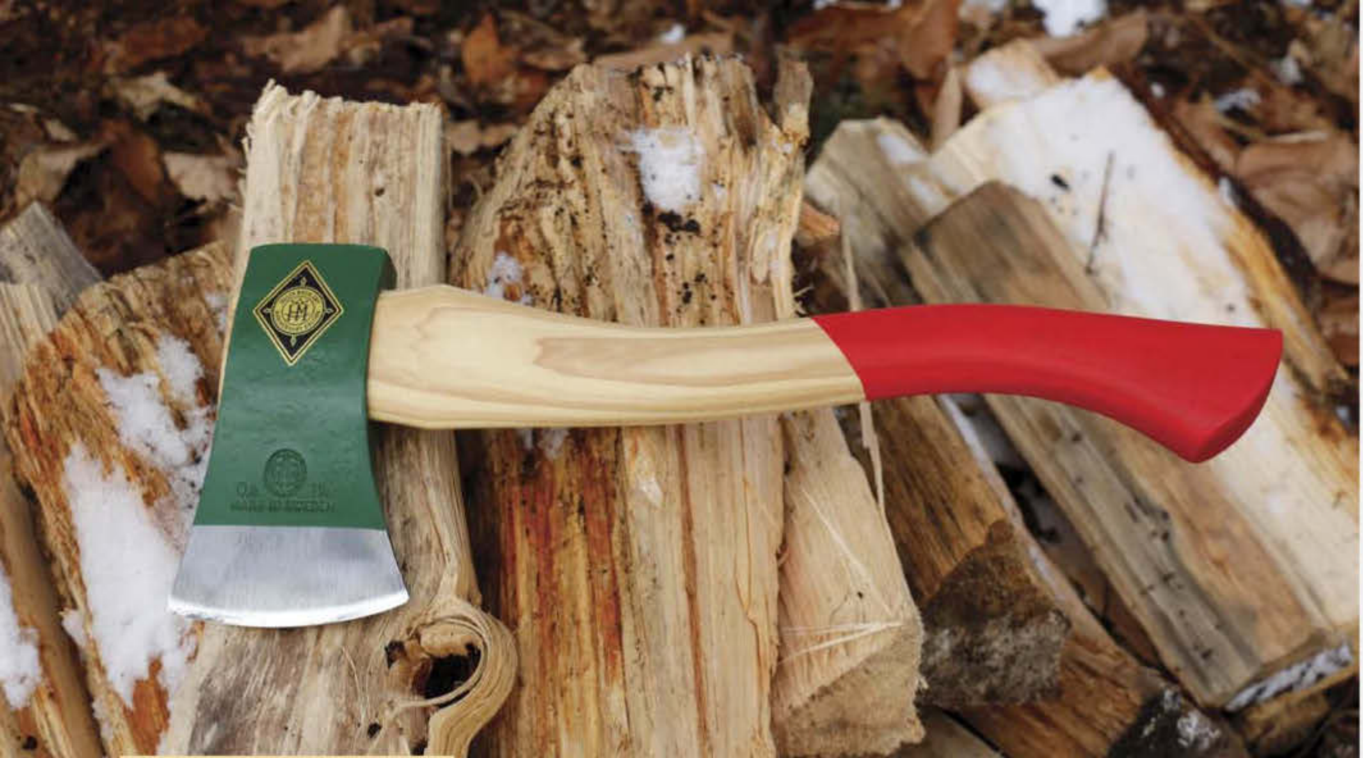
STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEVEN PAUL BARLOW

New, up-and-coming companies in the edged-tool industry tend to get lots of attention as if they have somehow reinvented the cutting edge. But what about the companies that turn out quality products based on more traditional designs and have done so consistently well over many years?

Hults Bruk is one of those companies that keeps providing top products that perform year after year with little fanfare. How long have the people there been doing it? This Swedish axe company has been in business since 1697. How's that for longevity?

I figured they must be doing something right, so I decided to find out for myself. On looking over the selection of axes and hatchets on the

> "THE BIT WAS VERY SHARP FROM THE BEGINNING AND THAT WAS A WELCOME FEATURE THAT YOU DON'T FIND ON INFERIOR AXES AND HATCHETS."



SPECS

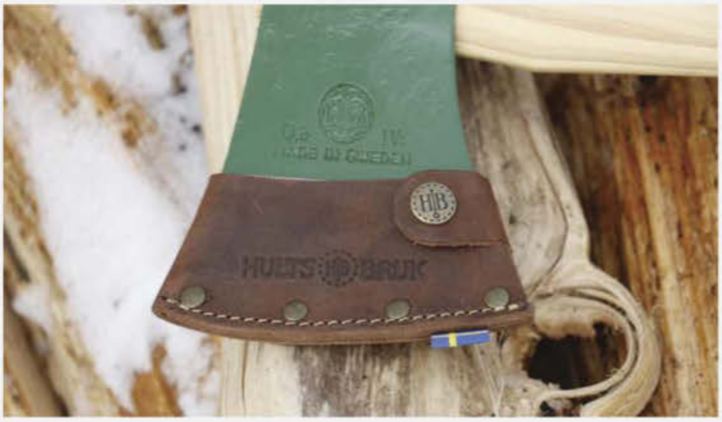
HULTS BRUK 325-YEAR ANNIVERSARY AXE

Overall Length: 15 inches
Head Steel: Hand-forged Swedish steel
Handle Material: American hickory
Sheath Material: Leather
Head Weight: 1.25 pounds
Total Weight: 2.2 pounds
MSRP: $184

SPECS

HULTS BRUK ANEBY HUNTING AXE

Overall Length: 20 inches
Head Steel: Hand-forged Swedish steel
Handle Material: American hickory
Sheath Material: Leather
Head Weight: 2 pounds
Total Weight: 2.75 pounds
MSRP: $179



Top: The Hults Bruk 325th Anniversary Axe is a one-handed, hatchet-sized tool with a good chopping capability.

Bottom: The Anniversary Axe comes with a leather edge cover that secures with a snap.

company's website, my initial reaction was that I wanted one of each. However, that wasn't going to be practical for this review, so I settled on just two: the 325-Year Anniversary Axe and the Aneby Hunting Axe.

WHY AN AXE?

I have a pretty good assortment of big blades, both knives and machetes. It's been said that you can do most anything with a big knife. However, big knives are often made with the type of steel and heat treat that might be good for providing a sharp edge, but not for taking a pounding during chopping tasks. They don't have the weight or the geometry for efficient chopping either.

Machetes are great choices for jungle travel or when you need to clear a path through a tangle of underbrush. Personally, I'm more likely to set up camp in a hardwood forest of North America. For my purposes, I'm more apt to forego the whole issue of the one-blade option and instead choose a three-blade (at least) battery that consists of an axe or hatchet, a mid-sized knife and either a bow saw or folding saw, depending on the size and weight considerations of the particular outing. That way I can choose whether the best way to accomplish a task is to chop, saw or cut, and I can preserve the sharp edge on my knife for knife-specific jobs.

So, do these two Hults Bruk products fulfill my chopping tool needs?

325-YEAR ANNIVERSARY AXE

Hults Bruk introduced this axe in 2022 to commemorate the 325th anniversary of the establishment of the company and it draws its inspiration from some of the company's legendary axes of the past.

The axe head itself is hand-forged

of Swedish steel. It weighs 1.25 pounds, follows the classic Yankee pattern and is finished with a narrow, five-step grind for a fine edge. The axe features a curvy hickory handle that provides for natural handholds in a couple of useful positions along its 15-inch length. That handle is protected with a coating of linseed oil.

Instead of a full-coverage sheath, this model comes with a full-grain leather edge cover that snaps in place and protects the user, the edge and other gear when the axe is being transported. An informative booklet detailing the history of Hults Bruk is included in the box, along with a leather key chain with a ship's nail attached that recalls the company's forging origins.

To further set this Anniversary Axe apart from others is a label on the head with the company's old HM (Hults Manufaktur) logo. The red on the handle and green on the head come from the Agdor series of axes introduced in 1930 that was popular throughout the 20th century.

Hults Bruk refers to this model as an axe, but at 15 inches long and designed to be used one-handed, it's what we think of as a hatchet. But it's built like an axe. That's what you get when you buy a hatchet made by an axe company. As such, it features a nice, heavy head with a true wedge shape going from the edge (bit) to the poll. That heavy wedge will give it good chopping and splitting capability.

By comparison, look at the hatchets offered by many knifemakers and you'll find thin heads that compromise splitting and chopping efficiency for the sake of saving some weight.

I put the 325th Anniversary Axe to the test first by hacking off some small limbs about one inch in diameter from a downed tree. This was an easy task for this tool. Then it proved its worth when I used it to split some forearm-thick hunks of firewood into kindling.

The bit was very sharp from the beginning and that was a welcome feature that you don't find on inferior axes and hatchets. I recall buying inexpensive hatchets and axes from hardware stores in years past that needed a lot of time and effort with a file on the bits to make them barely serviceable. The lesson is simple: Buy quality whenever you can. This Hults Bruk model exemplifies quality.

The hickory handle proved very comfortable and secure in use and provided excellent control of the tool. Holding the hatchet in the red throat area of the handle just above the flared knob provided the best leverage for chopping power. Moving my hand to the curved belly just above the red gave me added control for making more precise chops.

The head showed no signs of loosening. It's secured with both a wooden wedge and a round metal wedge. The leather bit cover was well made and provided enough security when setting the tool aside or carrying it inside a pack.

Top, Left: The Aneby Hunting Axe is short enough to use one-handed and just long enough at 20 inches to use with two hands..

Top, Right: These Hults Bruk axes proved to be impressively sharp as they came from cardboard boxes in which they were shipped.

Bottom, Right: The 15-inch curved American hickory handle of the Anniversary Axe provides several excellent locations for a secure grip on the tool.

Bottom, Left: The head of the Anniversary Axe weighs a substantial 1.25 pounds, making it a more efficient chopper than many modern, thin-bladed designs.

ANEBY HUNTING AXE

The Aneby Hunting Axe is one of those mid-sized choppers that I find very useful. The Aneby features a 2-pound, hand-forged head with a cutting edge about 3.5 inches long. Combine that weighty head (compared to a typical hatchet) with the Aneby's 20-inch hickory handle and you have some real chopping power in a package that's still pretty portable.

I would probably carry this model strapped to the outside of a pack, compared to the shorter Anniversary Axe that I'd probably tuck inside. The Aneby would be a good choice to store in an out-of-the-way place in your vehicle, too, in case you had to down some branches or saplings to clear a path around an obstacle in the only road back to civilization.

The axe head is shaped in the Turpentine pattern with a finger notch on the underside for excellent control when holding the tool by the head or directly under it for detail carving. The poll has rounded edges, a benefit if you use this axe for skinning game (it is labeled as a hunting axe, after all). I've skinned many whitetail deer. An axe head works well for the job, better than a narrow, pointy knife blade. The head of the Aneby is blackened Swedish steel with a polished edge.

The curved American hickory handle is sanded and treated with linseed oil. It's engraved with the Hults Bruk logo. At 20 inches, the handle is just the right length. If it was any longer, it would be a bit difficult to use one-handed. Any shorter, and it would be difficult to swing with both hands.

> "THE ANEBY HUNTING AXE IS ONE OF THOSE MID-SIZED CHOPPERS THAT I FIND VERY USEFUL."

The Aneby's handle features a lanyard hole, too, that would be helpful when hanging the tool to keep it off the ground in camp. The leather sheath cinches in place with a leather cord. A user's manual is included with some useful tips on the use and care of the tool.

The Aneby's bit was impressively sharp. Chopping small branches or splitting pieces of kindling proved easy work when using this tool, especially when using a two-handed grip. I tried grasping it just under the head to shave some wood, too, which is when that finger notch proved to be very helpful.

WHICH TO CHOOSE

There are numerous occasions when a mid-sized axe or a small hatchet is the best tool to have in your hands. No, you won't build a log cabin with either of these, but I doubt that was on your list anyway. Use one in your backyard to clear downed branches from the last storm or prepare firewood for the kids' marshmallow roast. Split kindling to keep yourself warm in a fall deer camp, make and pound tent stakes, trim poles to erect a tarp, build an emergency

Top, Left: The 2-pound Turpentine pattern axe head of the Aneby proved to be an excellent chopper.

Center, Top: The Aneby Hunting Axe came with a sturdy leather lanyard that secures with a leather thong.

Center, Bottom: The lanyard hole in the handle of the Aneby allows you to attach a short piece of cord to hang the axe in camp to keep it off the ground.

Top, Right: The 325th Anniversary Axe came with a leather key chain with a nail attached that recalls one of the company's early products. A booklet on the Hults Bruk forging tradition is included, too.

Bottom, Left: The Hults Bruk logo is engraved prominently in the handle of the Aneby.

SOURCE

Hults Bruk
HultsBruk1697.se

shelter, clear shooting lanes, or try your luck at accessorizing your primitive camp with a rudimentary stool, kettle support and other niceties.

Whether you choose the handy 325th Anniversary Axe or longer Aneby Hunter's Axe is up to you. Either will serve you well for many years. This was my first experience with Hults Bruk products and I was very impressed with their quality and usefulness.

I like to have a chopping tool available whenever I set up camp. The lineup of Hults Bruk axes and hatchets won't provide the ninja warrior mystique you might find with the hatchets and tomahawks from the custom knifemakers. But that mystique won't do much for you when you're alone in the woods and no one's watching. I'd rather have no-nonsense, serious woodsman's tools. That's what Hults Bruk has been producing for many, many years. **KI**

Top: Splitting chunks of firewood into kindling is a likely job for any Hults Bruk axe.

Center: Chopping downed tree branches was an easy task for the Aneby Hunting Axe.

Bottom: The finger groove on the underside of the Aneby axe head allows for an excellent grip for detail cuts or for shaving wood.

HULTS BRUK: A LONG HISTORY OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

Jacob Reenstierna founded an iron and steel factory that was to become Hults Bruk in the Hult Valley of Sweden in 1697. In that location, there were abundant forests to provide wood for the forge fires and ample water to power the hammers. Archaeologists have learned that the region was also where stone axes had been crafted as many as 5,000 years ago.

In the early days of Hults Bruk, the primary product was hand-forged nails for shipbuilding. Through the centuries the blacksmiths at Hults Bruk manufactured many products, including metal sheets, anchor chains, furniture castings, stoves, axes, spades and even rail cars.

The 19th century brought a great demand for forestry products. By the 1870s, axes became a major Hults Bruk product. An ironmaster named Ekelund, owner of Hults Bruk at the time, bought two axe-forging machines in 1877 to keep up with consumer demand.

The company's products were sold around the world under such names as Flecha in South America, Jarrah Jack in Australia and Tiger in Southeast Asia. Most famous, however, was the company's Agdor line of axes inspired by traditional North American axe patterns. These axes served the logging industry for many years. Many lumberjacks were willing to pay up to a month's wages to have an Agdor axe.

DEMONSTRABLY BADASS

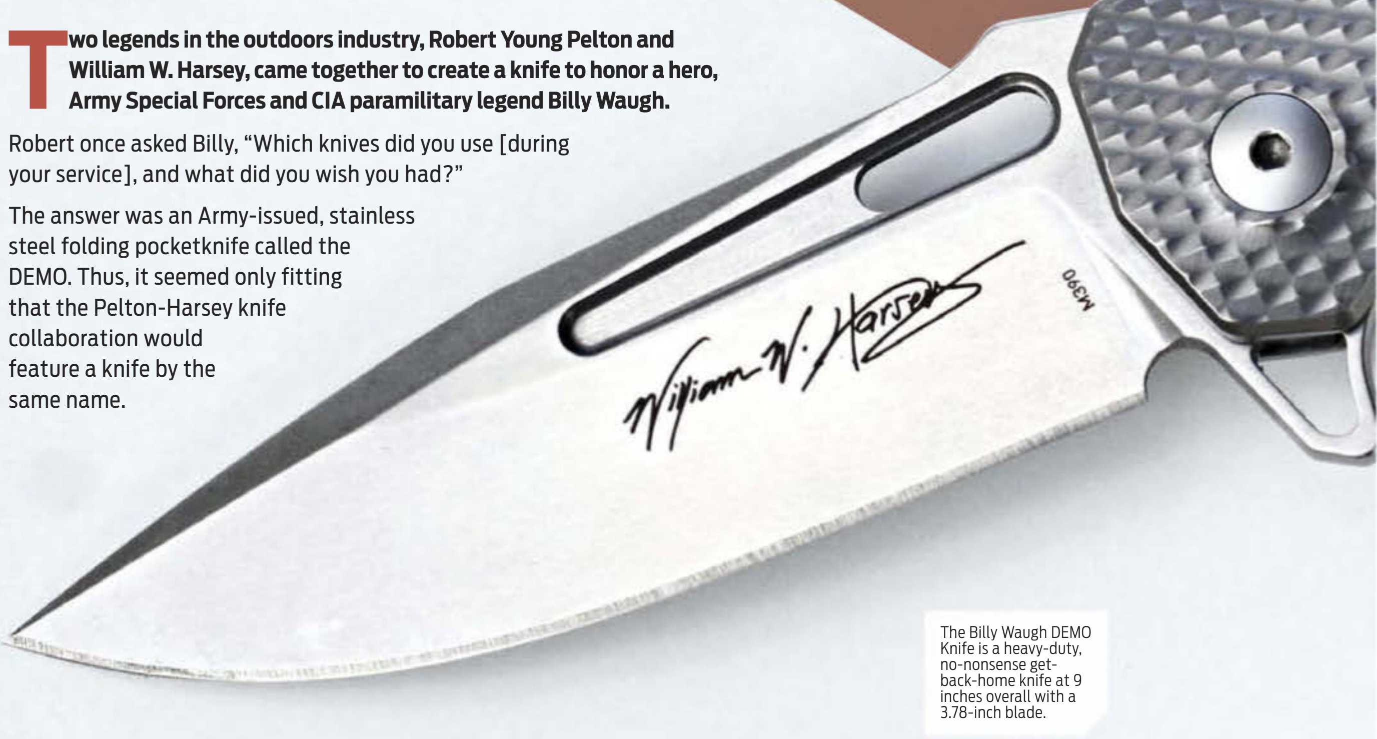
RYP DESIGN HONORS A LIFE BEHIND THE LINES WITH THE DEMO KNIFE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY REUBEN BOLIEU

Two legends in the outdoors industry, Robert Young Pelton and William W. Harsey, came together to create a knife to honor a hero, Army Special Forces and CIA paramilitary legend Billy Waugh.

Robert once asked Billy, "Which knives did you use [during your service], and what did you wish you had?"

The answer was an Army-issued, stainless steel folding pocketknife called the DEMO. Thus, it seemed only fitting that the Pelton-Harsey knife collaboration would feature a knife by the same name.



The Billy Waugh DEMO Knife is a heavy-duty, no-nonsense get-back-home knife at 9 inches overall with a 3.78-inch blade.

Billy Waugh
173

Billy Waugh
173

Above: The large spike/awl has a deep nail nick on both sides, allowing more accessible and convenient deployment.

Top, Right: The Billy Waugh DEMO Knife is your get-home-and-get-it-done EDC. It teeters on the larger size of a pocketknife but carries well.

RYP DESIGN

RYP Design is a newer venture for which Robert Young Pelton partners up with designers and legends to create products that are unique, ranging from books to graphic novels, and knives to survival designs. Robert recruited another Special Forces legend, William W. Harsey, to honor a hero and legend of Billy's caliber.

William is no stranger to collaborating with and honoring the Special Forces and is credited with many legendary combat-knife designs. To name a few, he collaborated with Colonel Rex Applegate to design Gerber's Applegate-Fairbairn line, and he worked with Chief James Watson to create Gerber's Watson/Harsey Silver Trident. William also worked with Chris Reeve and Matt Larsen to develop the LHR Combat Knife. He designed the Neil Roberts Warrior Knife dedicated to the memory of Petty Officer First Class Neil Roberts, who was killed in action in Afghanistan, and the Pacific/First Group Knife, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Army Special Forces in Asia.

The Yarborough Knife, named after Lt. Gen. William P. Yarborough, the "father of modern Special Forces," was presented to each United States Army Special Forces Qualification Course graduate. This may well be the most significant William W. Harsey design. The history of William's collaborations, combined with Billy Waugh's extensive knowledge and experience, make the production of an epic knife like the DEMO possible. This sort of coalescence of experience is what RYP Design is all about.

CHOP

If I understood the story right, Billy carried a locally made Parang while deployed, and Robert carried one in Borneo. The idea for the DPx gear CHOP (Heft 12) was Robert wanting something between a machete and a rugged survival knife. The beastly chopper was supposed to have Billy's name on it, but Billy said, "Why the hell would anyone want my name on their knife?"

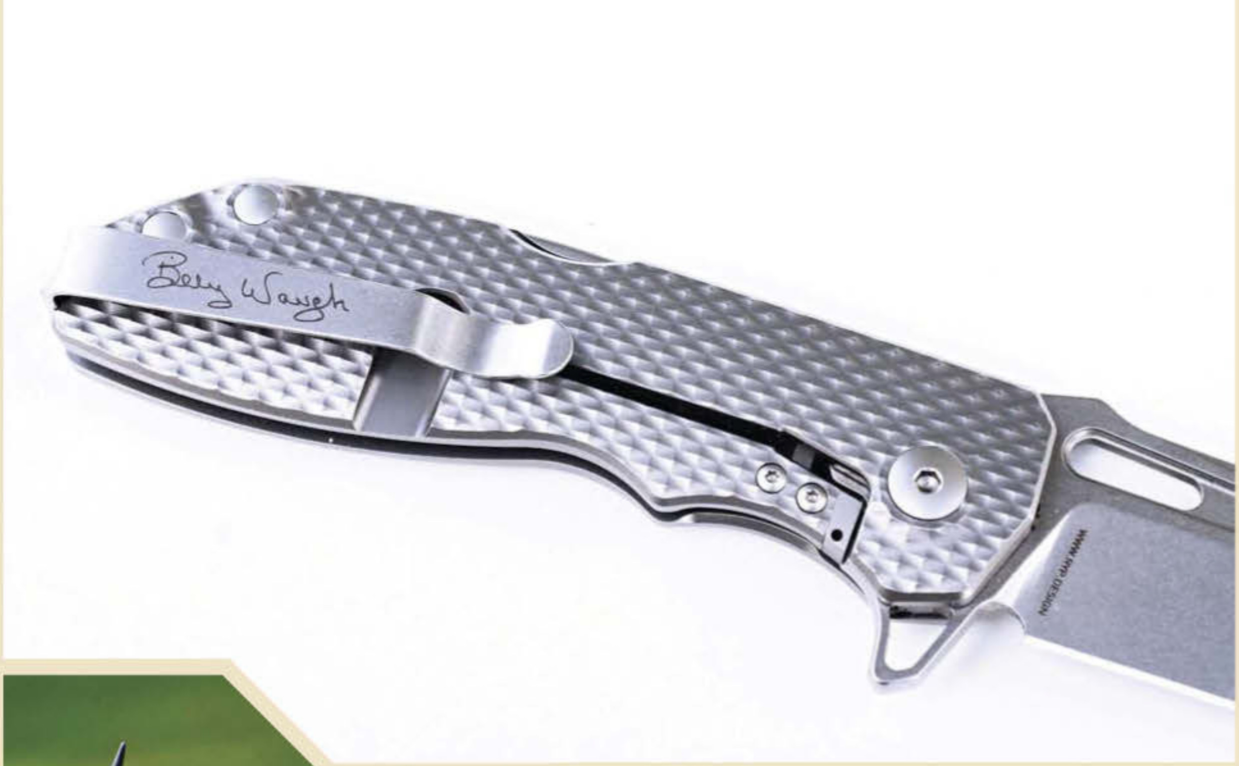
The DPx CHOP was the knife I chose to take into the jungle several years ago on a trip to the Philippines. I was doing a jungle survival class where I had to use a long blade to make everything. This meant swamp-bed shelters, cutting firewood, making traps, cooking using bamboo, scraping tinder shavings from bamboo and hammering stakes into

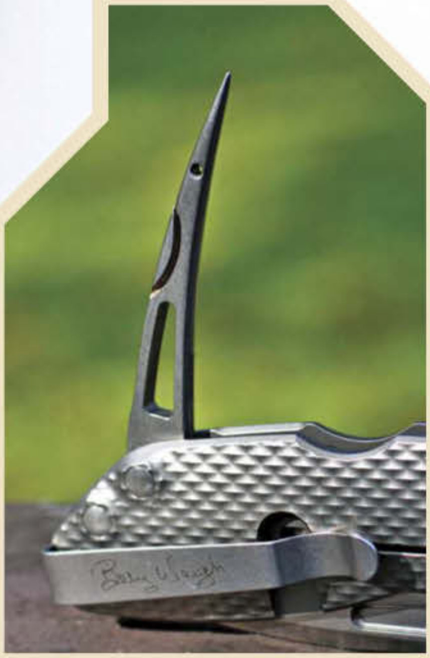
WWW.RYP.DESIGN

Top, Left: The Böhler M390 stainless steel was the perfect steel for this legendary knife.

Top, Right: The sleekness of the Billy Waugh DEMO Knife can be seen here with a generous pocket clip that is reversible and a glass breaker that can be changed out.

Bottom: The illustrious diamond-shaped titanium pattern provides looks and a secure grip.





Top: The Billy Waugh signature on the pocket clip of the DEMO Knife. The handle is a souped-up, classy frame-lock design.

Left: The spike/awl proved to be a versatile tool to get home and get the job done.

Right: RYP Design has collaborated with two Special Forces legends to produce the Billy Waugh DEMO Knife.

the ground for tarps. This 12-inch Parang-like blade made of D2 steel performed flawlessly on bamboo and hardwood yet had the finesse to do the delicate tasks. Billy may have dodged slapping his name on the CHOP, but he wouldn't get so lucky the second time around.

DEMO

This is not a small, dainty EDC knife; it's a step up. The Billy Waugh DEMO is a medium-large, full-sized handful of thunder and lightning. The overall length is a hair over 9 inches open and features Böhler M390 steel, with a stonewashed matte-black PVD (physical vapor deposition) coating. The blade is hardened to 60 on the Rockwell Hardness scale, all 3.78 inches of it. The handle is made of a unique diamond-patterned 3D titanium and is hefty at that. The Billy Waugh DEMO features an IKBS (Ikoma Korth Bearing System), which allows for ultra-smooth blade deployment. It basically features an indentation containing multiple free-rolling/floating ball bearings on which the knife blade sits. It will enable the knife to roll out of the handle with barely any effort. IKBS pivot system knives are distinguished by their light, fluid blade movements and secure blade position, which is why Billy's knife features this system.

The butt/pommel is equipped with a removable tungsten carbide glass breaker. The pocket clip is significantly sized and easy to grip. The deep-pocket combat clip carries the knife in a tip-up orientation and is engraved with Billy Waugh's signature.

TALON

OK, it's a marlin spike/awl that appears to be more of a narwhal. One thing is for sure: This isn't a typical Swiss Army Knife awl with a sharpened portion; this one is rounded and smooth. I would say it is more of a gouger than a driller. The spike/awl is made from 440 stainless steel. This thing is beastly and resembles a sharp talon, in my opinion. It splices rope and helps undo knots better than a Swiss Army Knife awl because it gradually gets more expansive and lacks the sharpened part. It essentially

Above: The author calls this the talon, which is actually a hunk of 440 stainless steel meant for the most brutal of puncturing tasks.

> “A SIMPLE WRIST MOVEMENT WHILE PUSHING DOWN ON THE PROTRUDING FLIPPER WILL QUICKLY CONVINCE PEOPLE IT IS AN AUTOMATIC, JAMES DEAN-LIKE SWITCHBLADE.”

Above: A length of 500-pound tow strapping was sliced with the Billy Waugh DEMO Knife.

Top, Left: The author sliced up the thick rubber hose with ease. He noticed no drag or edge depletion.

Top, Right: The M390 stainless steel blade easily penetrated a metal MotoMix canister several times without sustaining damage.

wedges the cordage and doesn’t cut or fray it. It locks in place and stays solid through all tasks. The thumb nick is wide and easy to feel and use. It floats open and closed on bronze washers and delivers a powerhouse puncture.

DEPLOYMENT

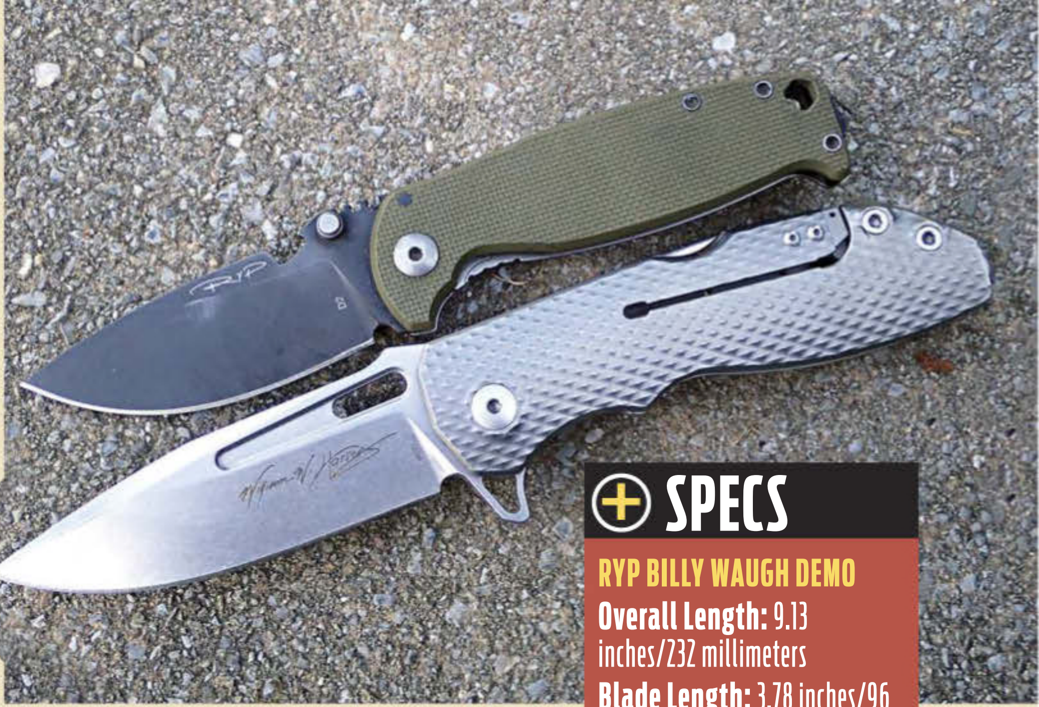
As said before, the IKBS allows for ultra-smooth blade deployment, and there are a few ways to deploy the blade. There isn’t a thumb stud to aid in opening the blade, but there is a recess that smoothly transitions into a fuller. In fact, this blade area looks like the DPx CHOP, only smaller and is on a folder. I didn’t have much luck using this thumb cutout; however, it does allow for a slow roll, pinch opening. Flicking it with the forefinger or middle finger may be the fastest way to deploy the blade, but it takes some practice. I prefer the flipper. Not the dolphin from the 1964 TV show who’s faster than lightning. However, this flipper is as fast and fluid. A simple wrist movement while pushing down on the protruding flipper will quickly convince people it is an automatic, James Dean-like switchblade. The weight of the blade does the work for you.

In reverse mode (tip up), a finger flick with the middle finger combined with a wrist snap will also deploy the blade quickly. The cutout works well to deploy the blade if you pinch-grip it (forefinger and thumb) and give a quick, simple downward wrist flick using the handle’s weight to open the knife. For those times when you aren’t in any rush at all, holding the knife with one hand while the other uses the cutout like a large nail nick to open it, as you would a classic folding knife, works well. Either of these techniques will get you there.

GET-HOME KNIFE

If you can imagine all the things you may need to do behind enemy lines to get back to familiar soil, then you are ahead of the game—I can’t. The Billy Waugh DEMO gets you more than halfway there.

I put the Billy Waugh DEMO through a gauntlet of chores unsuitable for most folding knives. Not actual abuse, but riding that fine line. The



> “USING THE DEMO AS A PUNCTURING TOOL IS BEST IN A FIST OR ICEPICK GRIP. IT PLUNGED INTO AN EMPTY METAL MOTOMIX CANISTER AND PENETRATED RATHER THAN JUST BUCKLING OR DENTING THE CANISTER.”

SPECS

RYP BILLY WAUGH DEMO

Overall Length: 9.13 inches/232 millimeters

Blade Length: 3.78 inches/96 millimeters

Steel: Böhler M390

Rockwell Hardness: 60

Blade Coating: Matte-black PVD

Blade Thickness: 0.16 inch/ 4 millimeters

Handle Material: 3D titanium

Carry: Tip-up

Weight: 6.80 ounces/193 grams

Origin: Italy

MSRP: $495

first test for me and any cutting tool is to see how well it will shave hair off my arm straight out of the box. It was a razor blade with a handle for the shaving-hair test. Using a chest-lever grip, I cut a rubber hose by bending it first and then slicing through the material. The rubber hose was thick yet no match for the DEMO. Eventually, I sliced the hose on a cutting board using the belly of the knife, which glided through like...rubber.

Eager to puncture something, I was ready for talon time. Thanks to the bronze washers and good craftsmanship, the tool floats out flawlessly, and the nail nick doesn’t leave you searching. It is deep and easy to feel, just in case you need to deploy it in low-level light as a self-defense tool.

Using the DEMO as a puncturing tool is best in a fist or icepick grip. It plunged into an empty metal MotoMix canister and penetrated rather than just buckling or denting the canister. The next puncture test was on another canister, wherein the DEMO penetrated halfway into the canister before the tool stopped. The last test for the spike was using it on a rubber tire. Again, no issues in comfort or penetration. The sharp spike proved to be a formidable tool and a useful feature of the DEMO knife. I’ll still call it a talon.

Back to the blade portion of the tests, it was time for slashing, stabbing and slicing. In the same way the talon was tested, now the blade would have a chance to

Top, Left: The author pounded the spike/awl/talon into a fuel canister using an icepick grip and while wearing leather gloves.

Top, Right: Size comparison between the Billy Waugh DEMO Knife and the DPx Gear HEST 2.0 folding knife. It isn’t a small knife for the ultralight crowd, but you won’t need much more than this.

Center, Left: The blade of the Billy Waugh DEMO Knife was also pounded into the same metal canister and wiggled around for good measure.

Bottom, Right: The blade was used to scrape fatwood at a 90-degree angle until there was a pile the size of a 50-cent piece.

“TOMATO SLICING IS THE ULTIMATE TEST OF ANY EDGE. AFTER DAYS OF USE AND SURVIVING THE GAUNTLET, THE DEMO SUCCESSFULLY SLICED AND DICED A TOMATO—LITERALLY.”

puncture through the light metal canisters. Held in an icepick grip and while I wore leather gloves, the DEMO was stabbed through the MotoMix canister repeatedly and levered back and forth for good measure. The lock was solid, and the blade was sharp. It punctured easily with the tip and the blade’s edge sheared through like butter. Canister number two received the same results as the MotoMix.

Time to slice heavy nylon tow strapping. After the metal canisters, the Böhler M390-steel blade was still sharp on the thick, heavy-duty material. This task definitely required a sawing motion to sever the webbing. It was a tough job; however, the handle stayed comfortable, and the lock was still spot on. I made fatwood shavings using the blade at a 90-degree angle, scraping vigorously. This will dull knives. The shavings were small, thin and curly, which would easily take a spark. I first stabbed a rubber tire before making a feather stick to see if the edge was still sharp enough to pull it off. The DEMO had no problem making a couple of feather sticks before the last real challenge.

Top, Left: Dicing a tomato is a difficult task for knives. The Billy Waugh DEMO Knife did it after completing the gauntlet of tasks.

Top, Right: After testing the Billy Waugh DEMO Knife on other tasks, the author easily made feather sticks without having to touch up the blade. Edge geometry prevails.

FINALE

Tomato slicing is the ultimate test of any edge. After days of use and surviving the gauntlet, the DEMO successfully sliced and diced a tomato—literally. The lock remained strong. There was zero blade play, and the edge kept on going. The DEMO knife proved a real fighter, much like its inspiration and namesake, Billy Waugh! **KI**

Left: The awl/spike was the puncture champion on all materials, especially the rubber tire.

Bottom, Left: The sharp edge of the Billy Waugh DEMO Knife easily sliced into a tire without dragging. The knife remained comfortable throughout all the puncture tests.

BILLY WAUGH CHEATSHEET

- Billy tried to sign up for World War II and join the Marines at the age of 15 in 1945.
- Billy signed up for the U.S. Army and quickly chose the most dangerous tasks our nation demanded by joining the Army Special Forces.
- In 1955, Billy joined the 10th Special Forces Group.
- Billy trained to parachute into Russia with a nuke.
- In 1965, Billy led a raid against 4,000 North Vietnamese in Bong Son.
- In 2001, the CIA sent Billy to Afghanistan.
- Billy continued his Special Forces career by dedicating another 20 years to the CIA post-retirement.
- At 71 years old, Billy became the oldest CIA paramilitary in history. During his career, he was shot eight times and left for dead, but he wasn’t dead—he was Billy Waugh!

SOURCES

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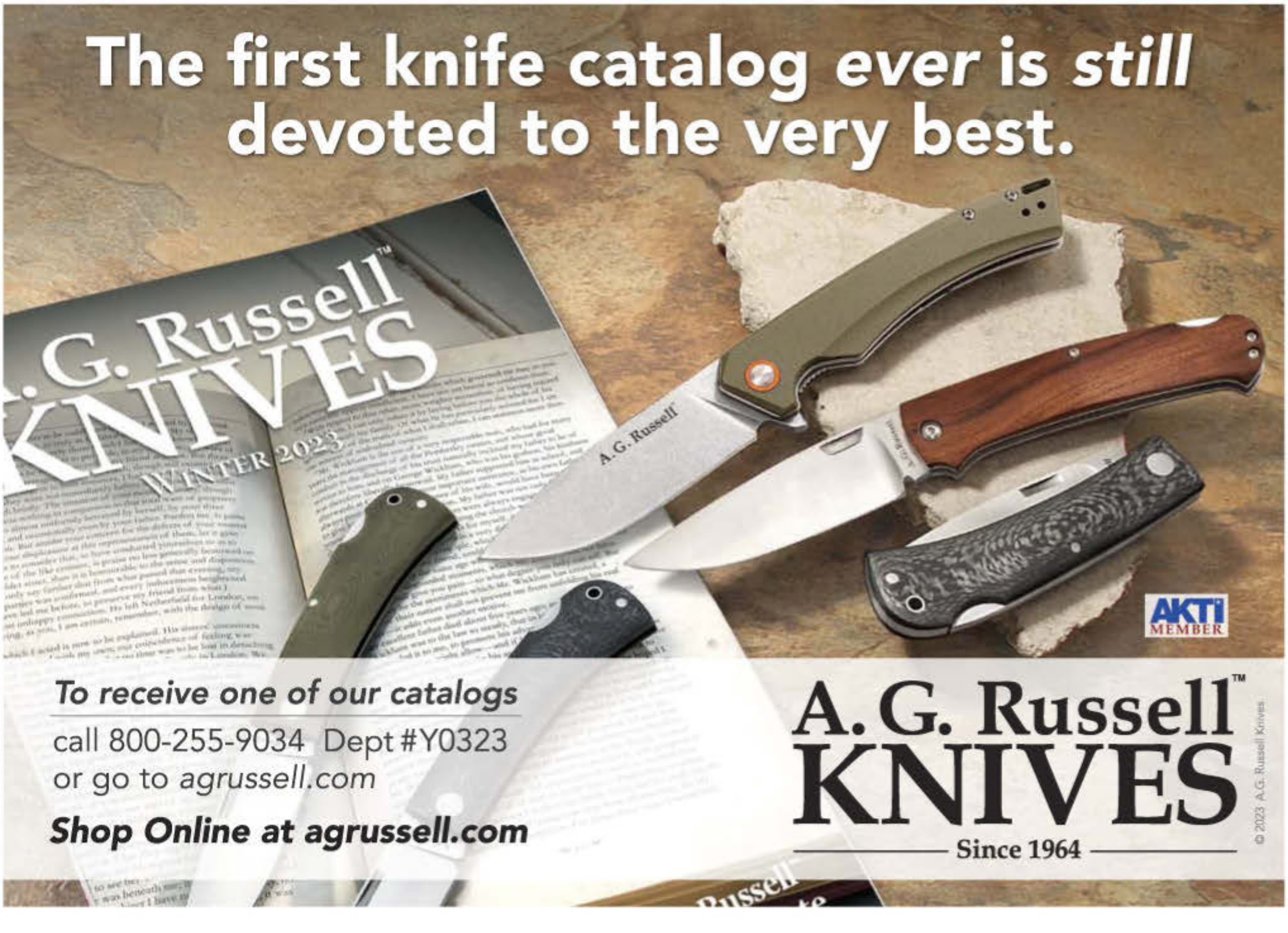
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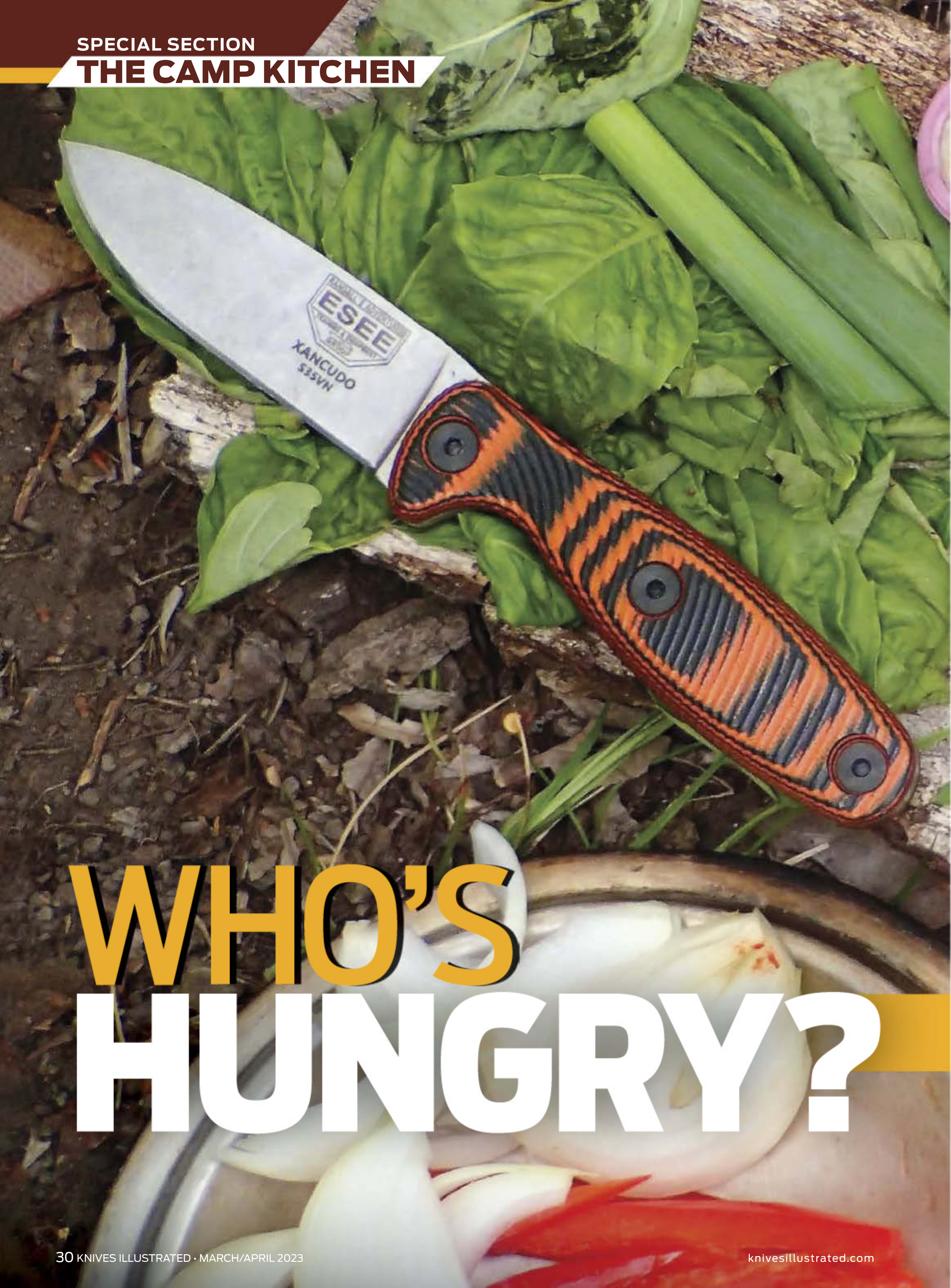

ESEE
XANCUDO
S35VN

WHO'S HUNGRY?

Photo credit: Reuben Bolieu

THESE HANDY KNIVES CAN HANDLE ALL OF YOUR FOOD PREP CHORES NO MATTER WHERE YOU'RE COOKING

BY KI STAFF

Playing in the great outdoors can generate a terrific hunger, whether you're hunting, fishing, camping, canoeing or hiking. You probably won't be able to take a drawer full of blades with you for your camp kitchen, so you'll probably keep portability in mind when selecting your knives. And because the menu can change from steaks on the grill to the catch of the day, to the traditional hot dogs and beans, you'll want the few knives you bring to be as versatile as possible.

THE PB&J KNIVES CLEAVER

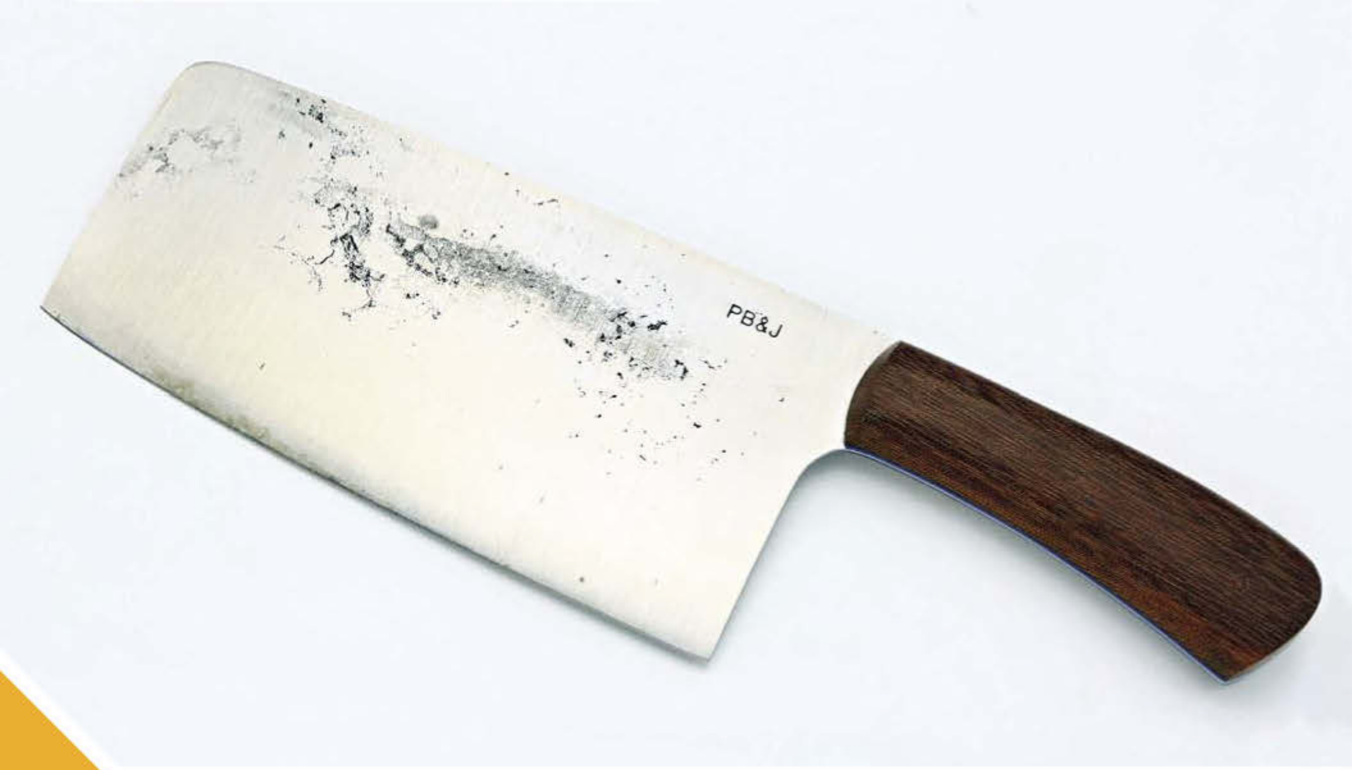
A GREAT FOOD PREP BLADE FROM GUYS WHO LOVE TO COOK OUTDOORS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY REUBEN BOLIEU

Several years ago at a knife trade show, I saw a table full of rustic knives and one very large Parang. A sign there read PB&J Handmade Knives, which were made in the USA. I thought it was an interesting name; I always liked peanut butter and jelly as a kid. PB&J comprises three guys: brothers Phillip and Barry Jones, and Jake Kirks. The P stands for Phillip, the B stands for Barry, and the J stands for Jake—all coming together to make up PB&J Handmade Knives.

PB&J Handmade Knives Veggie Cleaver with a 7-inch-long blade and 15N20 blade steel. Made in the USA from bandsaw steel and crafted by three guys who love cooking and knives.

> “IF YOU AREN’T USING YOUR OWN KNIVES, HOW CAN YOU EXPECT YOUR CLIENTS TO?” — BARRY JONES



> “THE HANDLE WAS COMFORTABLE, AND THE BLADE WAS BEYOND SHARP.”

THE PB&J WAY

These guys like cooking just about as much as I do. Be it indoors or outdoors, PB&J love to cook! I’ve had conversations and emails about this with them—it’s true. Catching up with Barry Jones on the telephone and by email gave me a chance to peek behind the PB&J curtain.

KI: What made PB&J start making kitchen cutlery?

BJ: We started making kitchen cutlery because all three of us love to eat good food. We really enjoy cooking outdoors on open fires and do so as often as possible. Our social media postings of our cooking endeavors pushed us into making our own food prep cutlery so we could have not only a decent knife to use to prep our food but one to show off on the internet. If you aren’t using your own knives, how can you expect your clients to?

KI: Do you all enjoy cooking inside and outdoors?

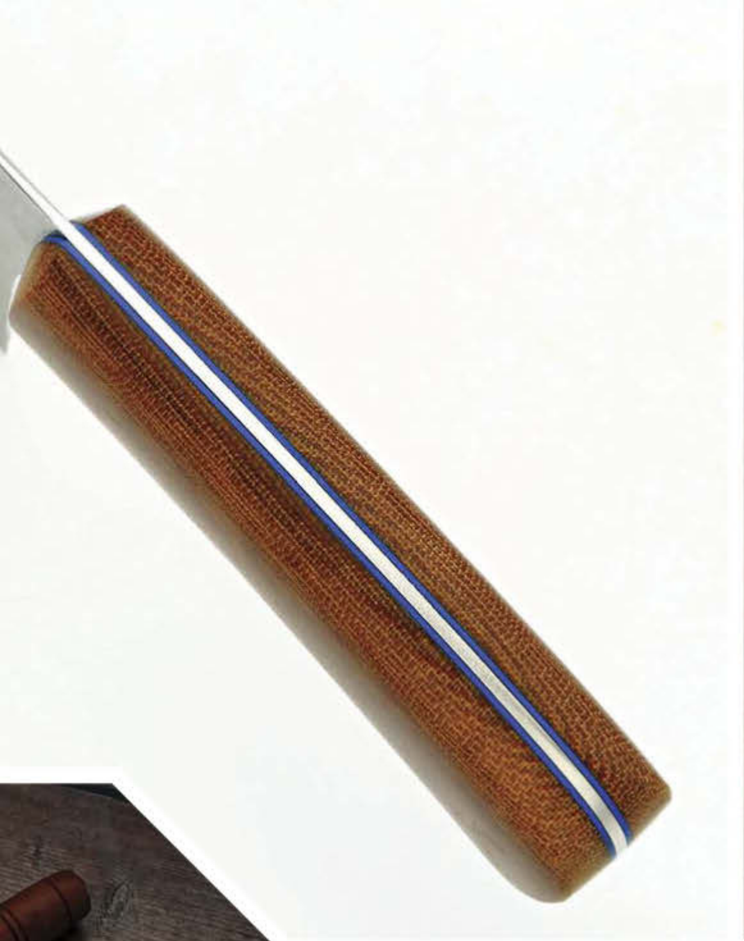
BJ: Phillip and I cook all the time, indoors and outdoors. Our parents and grandparents rarely went out to restaurants to eat, and that was instilled into us. Preparing our own food just makes sense, too. We can control every aspect of what we eat.

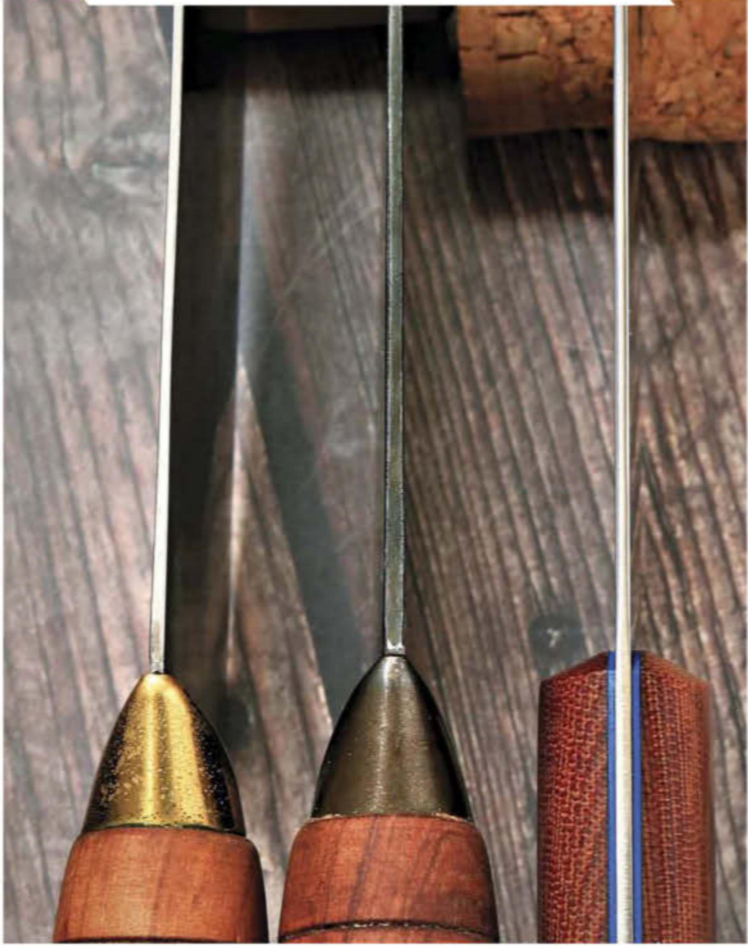
KI: What type of materials do you favor for outdoor knives and kitchen knives?

BJ: I can’t really say that we prefer one material over any others for any of our knives. We value performance and quality. Both can be obtained with a wide variety of materials. It boils down to how the steel is heat-treated and how the

Above: The Veggie Cleaver from PB&J Handmade Knives features a 15N20 blade, Micarta scales and convex edge. The overall length is 11 ½ inches, with a 7-inch blade.

Right: Two Chinese vegetable cleavers surrounding the PB&J Handmade Knives Veggie Cleaver (middle). All have similar thinness and performance.





knife blade is shaped.

KI: Why 15N20 steel for the cleaver?

BJ: I've got to be blunt and honest here. The 15N20 steel we use for our kitchen cutlery comes from recycling old lumber mill bandsaw blades. The saw blades we get are thin and wide. It just made sense to make a thin, wide cleaver out of it. The steel makes an excellent kitchen knife. It's easy for us to work and it performs extremely well.

KI: What is your favorite dish to make outdoors?

BJ: This is a difficult question to answer. We cook a variety of different foods outdoors and really enjoy them all. I'd have to choose a venison stew.

VEGGIE CLEAVER

The PB&J Veggie Cleaver keeps with the more traditional chef's knife and cleaver size with a blade that's 7 inches long. Overall length rests at 11 ½ inches, with a 3/32-inch-thick spine that is great for slicing. The steel is 15N20, better known as bandsaw steel. This steel is used for kitchen knives, filleting knives, woodworking tools and even swords. It is also common to see 15N20 used with 1095 or 1084 steel to create pattern-welded Damascus steel. A full convex-ground blade is used on the PB&J Veggie Cleaver.

"Phillip hand-sharpens every kitchen knife we make," said Barry. "He sharpens on oil stones using no jigs or tools to set the edge angle other than his eyes and hands."

The attractive handle features brown, crosscut canvas Micarta scales with blue G10 liners that really pop and add another degree of excellence to the handle. Brass pins hold the scales in place and give it some class on top of all that. The cleaver has no sheath, as it is a kitchen knife. I made a cardboard and Gorilla Tape DIY sheath to transport mine to the woods.

KITCHEN KNIFE BASICS

Regarding proper kitchen knife techniques, three stand out as basic rules no matter what type of knife you are wielding. Tap chopping, cross chopping and rock chopping will meet about 90% of your cooking needs. It's worth a few hours to look into these

Top, Left: The handle features brown, crosscut canvas Micarta scales with blue G10 liners. Three brass pins hold the scales in place.

Top, Right: Here, two Chinese vegetable cleavers can be seen with the PB&J Handmade Knives Veggie Cleaver, full tang (right). The spines are thin, with the two Chinese cleavers featuring rattail tangs.

BASIC KITCHEN KNIFE SKILLS

Tap Chopping. Holding your forearm roughly perpendicular to the cutting board, use your wrist to bring the tip of the knife up and down. Cut the vegetables with the back 1/3 of the blade, letting the weight of the knife do the work. This action will make a tapping sound.

Cross Chopping. Regularly used if you need to quickly chop small vegetables or herbs. Holding the knife's handle with one hand, put the palm of your other hand on top of the blade (this helps you guide and control the chopping pace). Keep the blade tip down while you lift the knife's handle to chop. Your hands are safe because they're out of the way.

Rock Chopping. Similar to performing the cross chop, hold the blade's handle and keep the tip of the knife down on the board, but with the rock chop, you use your other hand to move the ingredient. As you chop, you will keep the blade still while pushing the vegetable forward.

Reminder: Curl your fingers to keep them safe from the blade.

techniques and practice as much as possible.

However, we can't get into these without first addressing the claw grip. Not the Jim Carrey claw from the movie "Liar Liar," but the grip you need to use to avoid a knife mishap. In the world of culinary cooking, the claw grip is a safe way to hold food items with the support hand while the knife hand performs its duties. This keeps a sure grip on food while the knife hand slices, cuts and chops whatever is needed. The best position for the support hand (non-knife hand) is making the claw, with the fingertips curled under and knuckles pressing down on the ingredient to keep it from rolling or sliding. At first, it may feel odd, but it's the safest place for your fingertips in relation to the cutting blade.

LET'S GET COOKIN'!

The PB&J Veggie Cleaver arrived right in time. Once the weather cools down, and the color of the forest looks like someone has had a heavy hand on the saturation level of a photo, it's time for chili.

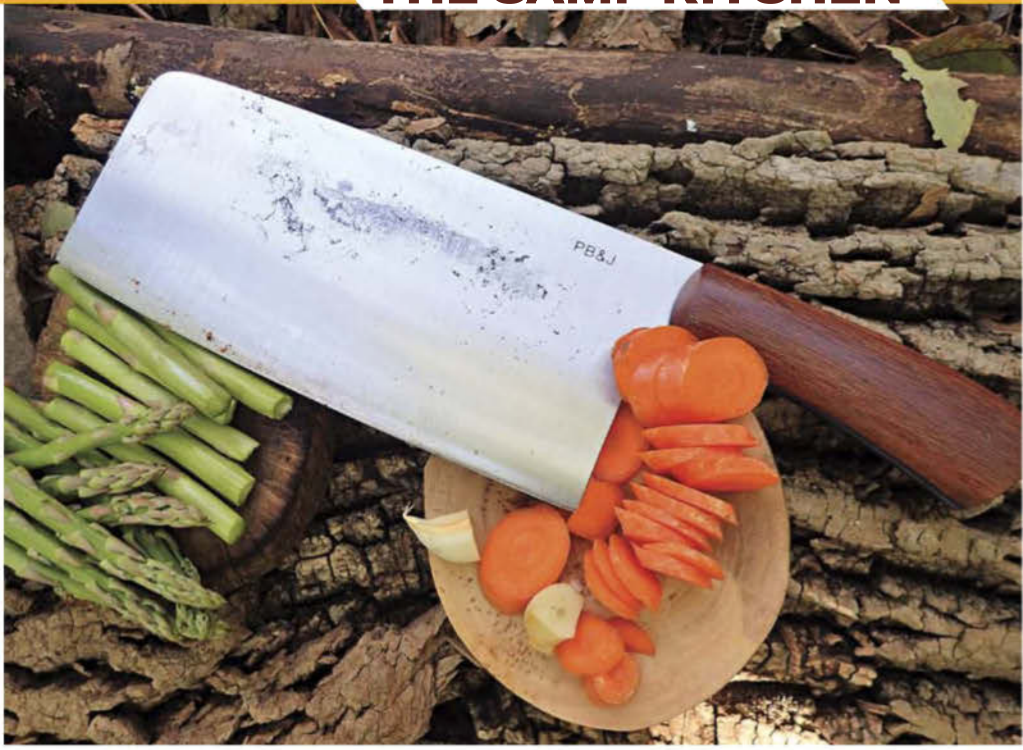
Above: The PB&J Handmade Knives Veggie Cleaver was used to prep pork for kabobs. The thin slicer is right at home working with meat and vegetables.

Bottom: The author displays cleaver techniques for dicing an onion for making chili. He uses the pinch grip about 90% of the time in the kitchen.

That's right: Cold weather, comfort food in the woods and the home kitchen are the highlights of my days. A few dishes I had in mind to prepare with the PB&J Veggie Cleaver were chicken soup, chili and hobo foil packets. I chose to do all the food preparation indoors that I would need for the duration of the test period.

CHILI CON CARNE

Perhaps the best dish I've prepared with the help of the PB&J Veggie Cleaver as of yet was chili con carne. This is prep-heavy, as veggies need to be chopped and



Top, Left: The author scored salmon for a foil-pack meal cooked in coals. It takes a sharp blade to easily cut through salmon skin without ruining it.

Top, Right: Slicing hard veggies like carrots and softer veggies like garlic and asparagus was no issue for the PB&J Handmade Knives Veggie Cleaver.

Bottom: See how the repetitive motion of rock chopping utilizes the tip of the cleaver downward towards the hilt. The opposite hand pushes the material forward.

> "THE PB&J VEGGIE CLEAVER WAS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT AND KEY TO SUCCESS FOR THIS AND MANY OTHER DISHES."

diced. I used all the techniques like cross chopping, tap chopping and rock chopping to get the correct sizes. I like a lot of vegetables in my chili. I know people from different places pride themselves on their chili and stick to strict rules. Some states don't use beans, some areas don't use meat and others don't use tomatoes. This is my version of chili con carne (with meat), and I like it just fine.

Most of the work is in the preparation of the vegetables. I use onions, garlic, celery and bell peppers, as well as ground beef, crushed tomatoes, kidney beans and black beans. Prepping the veggies was fun and effortless. I first noticed the weight difference between my regularly used Chinese cleavers and the PB&J Veggie Cleaver. The lightest cleaver I got from Hong Kong weighs 8 ounces, and the largest is over 9 ounces. The PB&J Veggie Cleaver weighs 11 ounces and is full tang compared to the rattail tangs on my Chinese cleavers.

The handle was comfortable, and the blade was beyond sharp. Most Chinese cleavers have a straight, flat edge, as do mine. The PB&J Veggie Cleaver hints at a curve up towards the front of the edge. It can easily be seen in the photos that the blade distance from the spine to the cutting edge is less than near the handle. This gives the knife some belly, makes rock chopping smoother and allows it to roll more than a flat, Chinese-style cleaver.

SALMON HOBO PACK

For my foil-pack dish, I needed to score the salmon skin to ensure thorough cooking. I would consider this a delicate task, as a sharp knife is required to cleanly slice the skin. Carrots take a while to cook, so cutting them small was essential to match the cook times between salmon, asparagus and hard carrots. I had a simple, disc-shaped cutting board in the woods, just enough for this simple preparation. The PB&J Veggie Cleaver was an essential ingredient and key to success for this and many other dishes.

CHICKEN SOUP

A classic with a twist. Years ago, I had the best chicken soup in

Alaska with corn and lots of black pepper. This changed my chicken soup recipe for good. I set out into the woods to make this northern chicken soup. I started out with a chicken leg. I separated the thigh from the drumstick with an easy cut just beside the fat line, through the joint where it cuts easiest. I removed the backbone attached to the thigh, as cheaper chicken legs often have this attached. The front portion of the cleaver sliced easily.

Deboning with a cleaver is an art form beyond the scope of this article. It involves breaking back the joint between the thigh and hip, then cutting through it while preserving as much thigh meat as possible. The bone can go in the pot, and the small amount of meat on it can be shredded into the soup.

Best of all, deboning adds flavor by allowing the other parts to cook easier, having been reduced in size. Soups and stews have always been about capturing and preserving as much flavor as humanly possible. A sharp knife makes this possible and skates along bones without their needing much touching up. As with the other ingredients, I sliced celery, onions and carrots with zero issues—just as easily as with thinner veggie cleavers. Success!

FINAL CUT

These boys from Virginia know how to work 15N20 steel and how to put an edge on a tool. The PB&J Veggie Cleaver ticks all the boxes on what a thin cleaver is meant to do. It performed flawlessly, and I look forward to whatever the PB&J crew comes up with next. **KI**

SOURCE

PB&J Handmade Knives
Phone: 434-857-6358
Email: jonesbros@comcast.net
Facebook Group: PB&J Handmade Knives
Instagram: pbj_handmade_knives

Above: This is what PB&J Handmade Knives uses for its cutlery: the same type of bandsaws that helped build this country.

Top, Left: Preparation for chili con carne was a breeze for the PB&J Handmade Knives Veggie Cleaver. The author used only three techniques, all with great success: rock chopping, cross chopping and tap chopping

Top, Right: The author is cross-chopping garlic for a fine dice. This is the safest and easiest way to chop herbs and dice meat or vegetables.

Bottom, Left: The driving force behind PB&J Handmade Knives is (left to right) Phillip Jones, Barry Jones and Jake Kirks.

WHAT IS 15N20 STEEL?

15N20 is high-carbon, high-nickel steel popular for its outstanding toughness and versatility. This steel is sometimes used with 1075, 1095 and 01 steels from Damascus steel manufacturers. Don't be surprised if you come across a 1080/15N20 or 1095 and 15N20 steel alloy knife.

Since it has a relatively low degree of difficulty to work with, 15N20 is an excellent steel for beginners and professionals who want to use it for knifemaking.

So, what is 15N20 steel used for? This steel is mainly used for making knives of all sizes. You'll find it in kitchen knives, filleting knives, swords and woodworking tools. 15N20 is also commonly used with 1095 or 1084 steel to create pattern-welded Damascus steel.

JANTZ

1-800-351-8900 knifemaking.com

15N20

With a 2% high nickel content, 15N20 is the layer of steel that produces the bright contrast for making Damascus. **Typical chemistry:C .75, Mn .40, Si .30, Ni 2.00, P max .020, S max .010**

CAT#	SIZE	LENGTH	PRICE
XN152	.049" x 1 1/2"	12"	$9.15
XN252	.049" x 2"	12"	$12.15
XN196	.095" x 1 1/2"	36"	$36.95
XN296	.095" x 2"	36"	$48.95

1084 High Carbon Steel

1084 Forging Steel is an excellent steel for beginning knife makers and professionals alike. An ideal choice for forging and for layering with 15N20 for Damascus. Hot rolled and annealed.

Chemistry:C .80/.93, Mn .60/.90

CAT#	SIZE	LENGTH	PRICE
XW1215	3/16" x 1 1/2"	18"	$17.50
XW1220	3/16" x 2"	18"	$23.50
XW1240	3/16" x 4"	18"	$33.75
XW1615	1/4" x 1 1/2"	18"	$45.50
XW1620	1/4" x 2"	18"	$28.95
XW1640	1/4" x 4"	18"	$59.50
XV1215	3/16" x 1 1/2"	36"	$36.23
XV1220	3/16" x 2"	36"	$48.65
XV1240	3/16" x 4"	36"	$94.19
XV1615	1/4" x 1 1/2"	36"	$48.65
XV1620	1/4" x 2"	36"	$59.93
XV1640	1/4" x 4"	36"	$123.17

80CrV2 Steel

The high carbon, chrome-vanadium chemical composition makes 80CrV2 a good steel for knives. Machines easy, has great edge retention, wear resisitance, and toughness. Aim Hardness 57. **Chemistry:C .85, Cr .60, Mn .50, Si .30, Ni .40, Mo .10, P .025, S .020**

CAT#	SIZE	LENGTH	PRICE
CZ0615	3/32" x 1 1/2"	18"	$8.95
CZ0620	3/32" x 2"	18"	$11.95
CZ0815	1/8" x 1 1/2"	18"	$11.95
CZ0820	1/8" x 2"	18"	$15.75
CZ1015	5/32" x 1 1/2"	18"	$14.75
CZ1020	5/32" x 2"	18"	$19.50
CZ1215	3/16" x 1 1/2"	18"	$17.50
CZ1220	3/16" x 2"	18"	$23.50
CZ1615	1/4" x 1 1/2"	18"	$23.50
CZ1620	1/4" x 2"	18"	$31.50
CV0615	3/32" x 1 1/2"	36"	$18.35
CV0620	3/32" x 2"	36"	$24.50
CV0815	1/8" x 1 1/2"	36"	$24.50
CV0820	1/8" x 2"	36"	$32.25
CV1015	5/32" x 1 1/2"	36"	$30.25
CV1020	5/32" x 2"	36"	$39.95
CV1215	3/16" x 1 1/2"	36"	$35.85
CV1220	3/16" x 2"	36"	$48.20
CV1615	1/4" x 1 1/2"	36"	$48.18
CV1620	1/4" x 2"	36"	$64.58

Quenching Oils

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
BS201	CITGO Oil 1 gal.	$74.24
BS205	CITGO Oil 5 gal.	$398.56
BS301	PARK'S 50 Oil 1 gal.	$76.42
BS305	PARK'S 50 Oil 5 gal.	$368.92
BS401	PARK'S AAA Oil 1 gal.	$52.36
BS405	PARK'S AAA Oil 5 gal.	$221.96

Metal Powders

325 mesh metal powders. Metal powders of 1084, 1095 or 1080 with a 2% pure nickel or 4% pure nickel mix for making canister damascus.

CAT#	METAL	SIZE	PRICE
PSBR2	Brass	2 lb	$49.95
PSCU2	Copper	2 lb	$49.95
PSBZ2	Bronze	2 lb	$56.95
PSNS2	Nickel Silver	2 lb	$79.95
PSBR5	Brass	5 lb	$109.95
PSCU5	Copper	5 lb	$109.95
PSBZ5	Bronze	5 lb	$119.95
PSNS5	Nickel Silver	5 lb	$149.95
PSNI1	Pure Nickel	1 lb	$80.16
PS845	1084	5 lbs	$38.95
PS955	1095	5 lbs	$38.95
PS802	1080 w/2% Ni	5 lbs	$41.95
PS804	1080 w/4% Ni	5 lbs	$45.95
PS841	1084	25 lbs	$159.95
PS951	1095	25 lbs	$159.95

Knifemakers Center Scribe

Shown marking center in steel

Scribing center lines for grinding knife blades. Can be adjusted from 0-1/2" with 1/32" per revolution using the fine adjustment screw. Uses a Carbide tip. Made in USA.

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
JS305	Center Scribe	$39.95
JS307	Replace Carbide Tip	$9.95

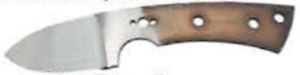
Hardened File Guide

Precision machined from A-2 tool steel and hardened to 62RHC. Overall 3.250", maximum blade width 2", each jaw is 3/8" x 3/4". Made in USA.

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
FG101	File Guide	$52.95

Jantz Pattern Blades

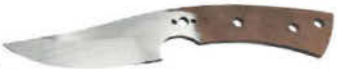
Custom quality 100% made in USA from the best USA made steels & cryogenically heat treated. Will not find a better product or value.



Jantz Mini Drop Point

Overall 7 1/4", 2 1/4" Blade.
Hole sizes: Bolster 1/8", Handle 1/4", Lanyard 1/4".

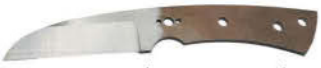
CAT.#	STEEL	FINISH	PRICE
J1601	14C28N	Satin	$26.95



Jantz Trailing Point

Overall 8", 3 1/4" Blade.
Hole sizes: Bolster 1/8", Handle 1/8", Lanyard 1/4".

CAT.#	STEEL	FINISH	PRICE
J1603	14C28N	Satin	$31.95



Jantz Pelican (Wharncliffe)

Overall 7 3/4", 3 1/4" Blade.
Hole sizes: Bolster 1/8", Handle 1/4", Lanyard 1/4".

CAT.#	STEEL	FINISH	PRICE
J1605	14C28N	Satin	$31.95

Belts Ceramic & Cork

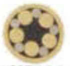
Ceramit® Flex

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
HRF27260	2" x 72"··60 grit	$7.50
HRF27280	2" x 72"··80 grit	$7.50
HRF272120	2" x 72"··120 grit	$6.75
HRF272220	2" x 72"··220 grit	$6.75

Cork

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
HRC272320	2" x 72"··320 grit	$7.95
HRC272400	2" x 72"··400 grit	$7.95
HRC272600	2" x 72"··600 grit	$7.95
HRC272800	2" x 72"··800 grit	$7.95
HRC2721000	2" x 72"··1000 grit	$7.95
HRC2721200	2" x 72"··1200 grit	$7.95

3/16" x 12" Mosaic Pins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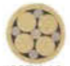
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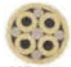
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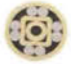
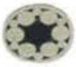

#MP330

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
MP300	Morning Star	$23.95
MP310	Lucky Clover	$23.95
MP320	Speeding Bullet	$30.95
MP330	Sunrise Glory	$30.95

Heavy Duty Black Canvas Handle with Lucky Clover Mosaic Pin

1/4" x 12" Mosaic Pins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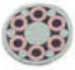
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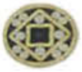
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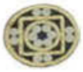
#MP430

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
MP440	Silver Star	$45.95
MP405	Circle Of Light	$45.95
MP400	Pandora's Box	$45.95
MP430	Full House	$45.95

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G-10 rods used for pinning handles. All are in 12" lengths. Many more colors are available online.

CAT#	COLOR	SIZE	PRICE
MI28411	Blue	1/8"	$5.50
MI28071	Lime Green	1/8"	$5.50
MI28211	Red	1/8"	$5.50
MI28311	Orange	1/8"	$5.50
MI28511	White	1/8"	$5.50
MI28811	Black	1/8"	$5.50
MI28911	Ivory	1/8"	$5.50
MI28611	Maroon	1/8"	$5.50
MI23411	Blue	3/16"	$6.50
MI23071	Lime Green	3/16"	$6.50
MI23211	Red	3/16"	$6.50
MI23311	Orange	3/16"	$6.50
MI24411	Blue	1/4"	$7.50
MI24071	Lime Green	1/4"	$7.50
MI24211	Red	1/4"	$7.50
MI24311	Orange	1/4"	$7.50
MI24511	White	1/4"	$7.50
MI24811	Black	1/4"	$7.50
MI24911	Ivory	1/4"	$7.50
MI24611	Maroon	1/4"	$7.50

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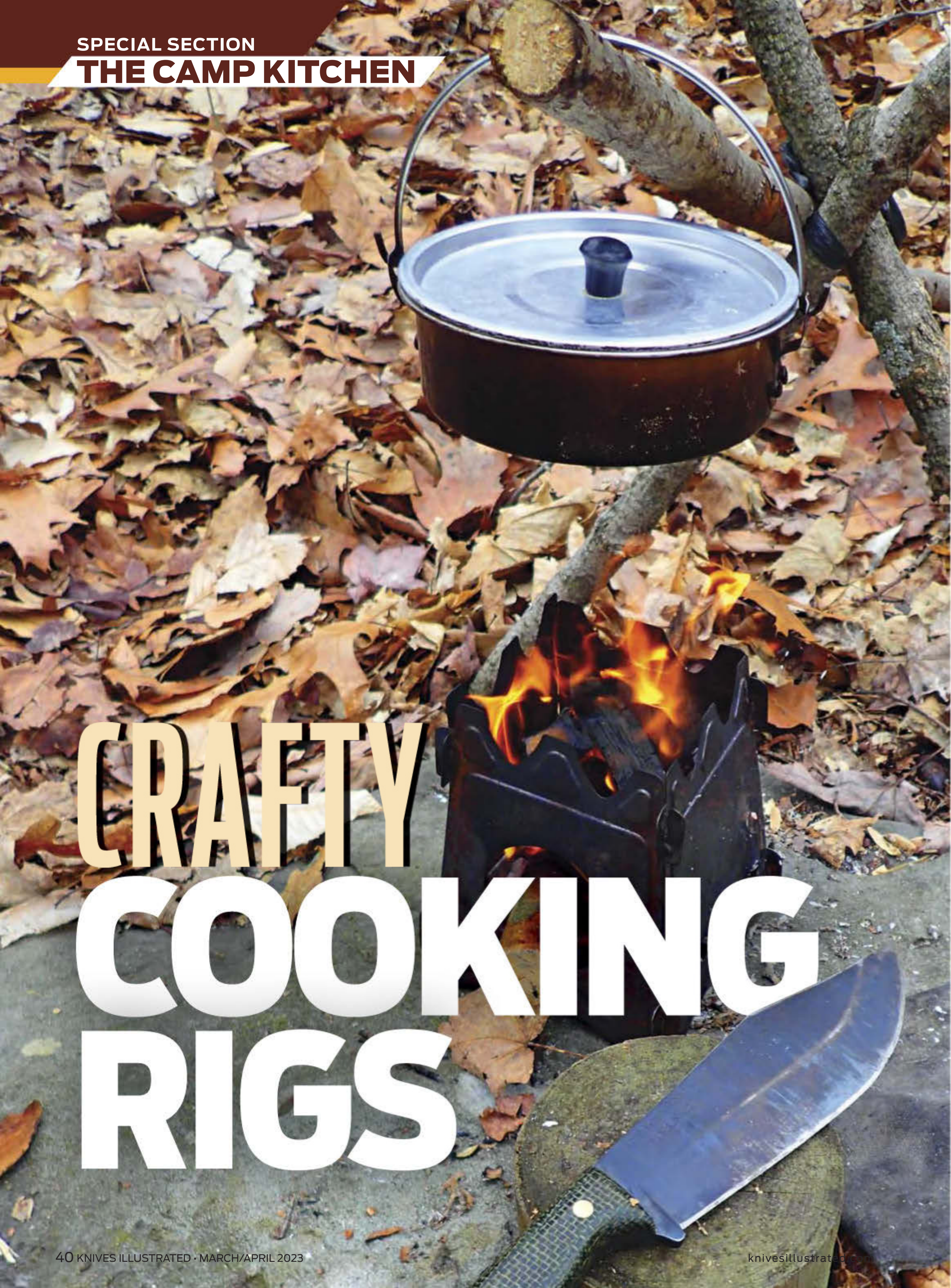
G5 EPOXY is a fast curing epoxy for quick repairs, tooling and general bonding. 3-5 min. curing. **G-FLEX EPOXY** is a toughened, resilient two-part epoxy engineered for superior grip. G-Flex absorbs the stresses of expansion, contraction, shock and vibration. Cures in 7-10 hrs. **G-FLEX SYRINGE** same G-Flex epoxy in a convenient syringe.

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
WE8654	G5 Five Minute 8oz	$28.67
WE6508	G-Flex Liquid 8oz	$26.95
WE6551	G-Flex Syringe .84oz	$22.95



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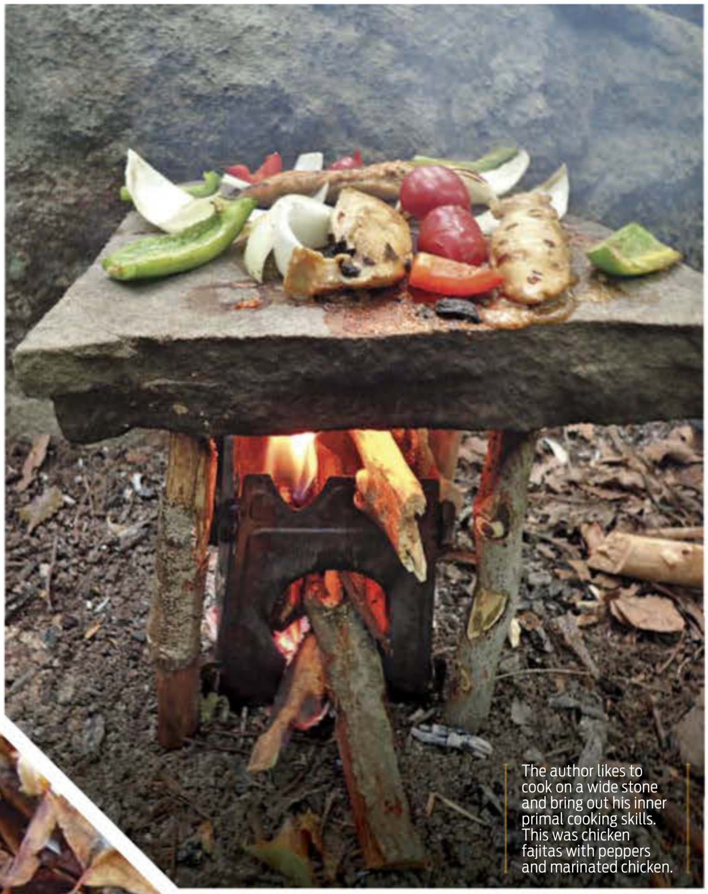
CHANGE HOW YOU **COOK OUTDOORS** WITH THESE **CLEVER SETUPS**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY REUBEN BOLIEU



The author likes to cook on a wide stone and bring out his inner primal cooking skills. This was chicken fajitas with peppers and marinated chicken.

When people think about an outdoor cooking system, they may picture a tripod with a pot hanging from it. A tripod setup may very well be one of the oldest cooking rigs, as depicted in every period-piece movie, TV show, book, or diagram in manuals.

A new take on a trusty old cook system, the tripod. The author made this low-hanging tripod to use with his twig stove.

Top, Left: The Victorinox Camper is the author's go-to craft knife. To make a hole through wood, he used the awl.

Top, Right: The corkscrew on a Swiss Army Knife has many uses and was used here to finish the hole made with the awl. It cleans it up for cordage on the Advanced Hanging Arm system.

"CAST IRON AND FRYING PANS, IN GENERAL, ARE HEAVY AND BULKY. STONES ARE, TOO, BUT THEY ARE MOTHER NATURE'S FRYING PANS AND ARE ALREADY THERE."

COOK SYSTEMS

For me, the highlight of any camping trip, day camp trip, or wilderness adventure is making a fire and devising different cooking methods. Besides a tripod, which is versatile for hanging a pot or used to create a smoker, there are countless other tried-and-true cooking methods.

A hot dog or chunk of meat impaled on a stick over the fire isn't exactly a cooking system/rig, but I'm sure we've all tried it with varying degrees of success. Two similar options meant to hang a pot over a fire are from the book, "Camp-Lore and Woodcraft" by Daniel Beard, published in the early 1920s.

One option is called the Speygelia and is a long stick with a notch or forked end that holds the pot and a small Y stick under it. The Y stick props the pot stick up at a 45-degree angle, and a stone pins the end down.

The second option is the Saster, similar to the Speygelia, but with a longer pole. However, this one is used to hang meat over or in front of the fire for roasting. In the book's chapters devoted to camp cooking, you will see the Belmore, Pioneer, Roasting, and Campfire lays.

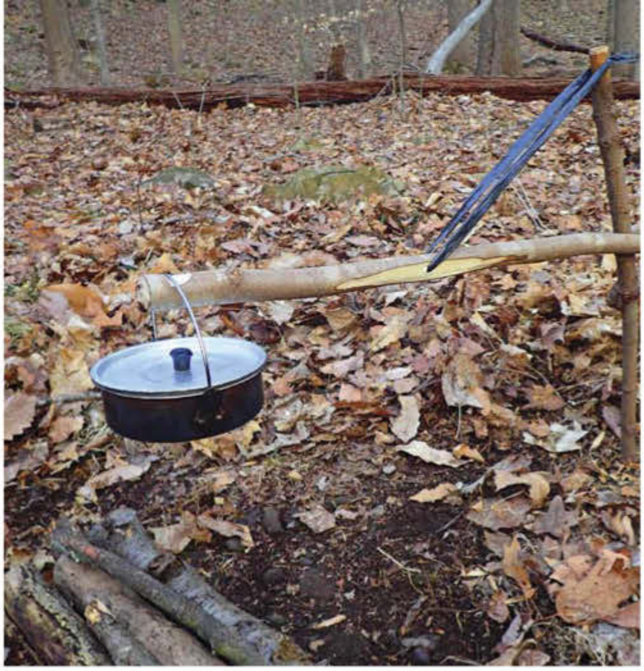
The iconic two-forked sticks with a crossbar (waugan stick) featuring hanging pots/kettles with two long logs at the base is the best rig for me. This cooking system was popularized by prolific outdoorsmen Horace Kephart and Nessmuk. In more modern times, the Burtonsville Rig, popularized by Mors Kochanski, raises and lowers a kettle over the flame via a series of pot-hanger notches on a stick with a forked bottom to hold the cooking vessel.

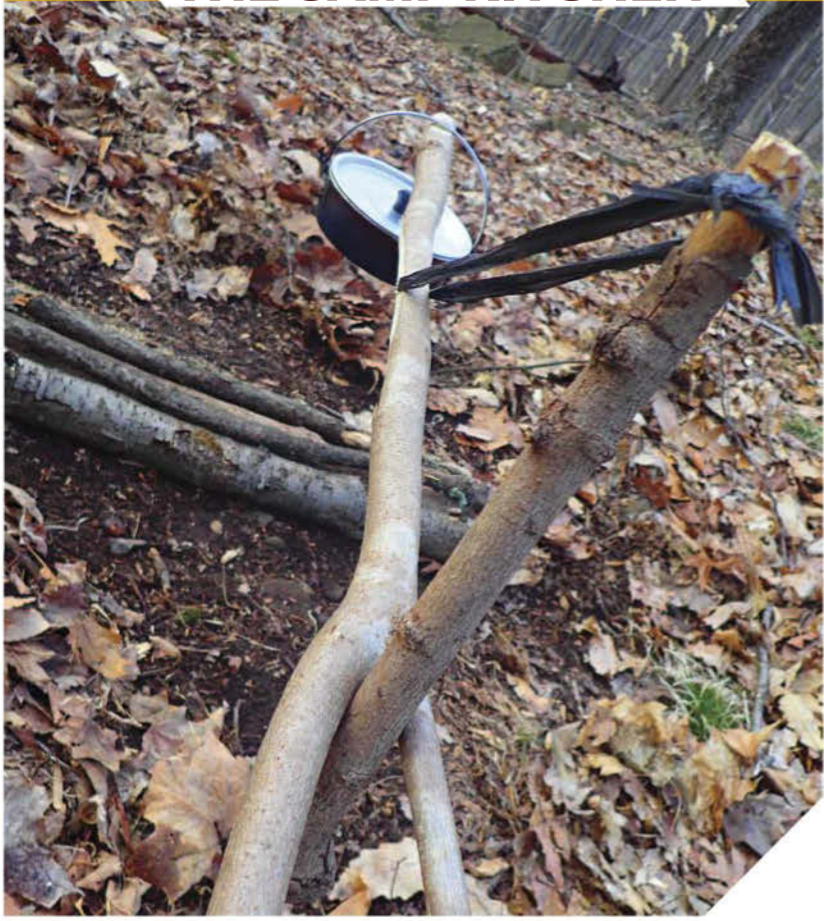
Times have changed and so have ways of cooking outdoors as bushcraft grows and continues to evolve.

DOVETAIL RIG

While researching some notches for a Knives Illustrated Try Stick article, I dove into the usefulness of a dovetail notch and how it could be used outdoors. I came across an old Boy Scouts field manual that showed how to use a dovetail notch to hold a support stick and a pot over the fire. It was called the One-Legged Fire Crane.

I saw only one notch from the writings and photos in the field manual. I wanted to modernize this system with variable levels of suspending a pot, meat, or a kettle. I used a large bucksaw I made from a 24-inch saw blade, a bolo knife with a 15-inch blade, and a Victorinox Swiss Army Camper knife.





Top, Left: The author used a Dan Wowak-inspired cook system that uses a suspended branch over a fire.

Right: The vertical piece holds the Y branch attached by cordage. A pilot stick should be used to get the vertical piece in place to preserve it from splitting from hammering into the hard ground.

Bottom, Left: The Y stick locks onto the vertical piece and is held in place via plastic cordage the author got in the Philippines.

Another handy and essential tool in a camp is a pilot stick, which is a robust stake that makes a pre-hole and takes the brunt of the work. I sawed a pole length the height of my leg, between 28 to 30 inches, and another half of that. I used between a broomstick and wrist thickness for the vertical pole and a little thinner for the horizontal (shorter) piece.

With the bolo, I chopped a chisel end to stick in the ground, turned the piece over, and made short, controlled chops to chamfer the top as it was upside down on a wooden surface. Carving would have taken longer but could be an option, as could be using a hatchet, axe, or tomahawk. I made a hole with the pilot stick and put the vertical piece inside to better gauge where I wanted the notches. I marked them with the bolo and went to sawing.

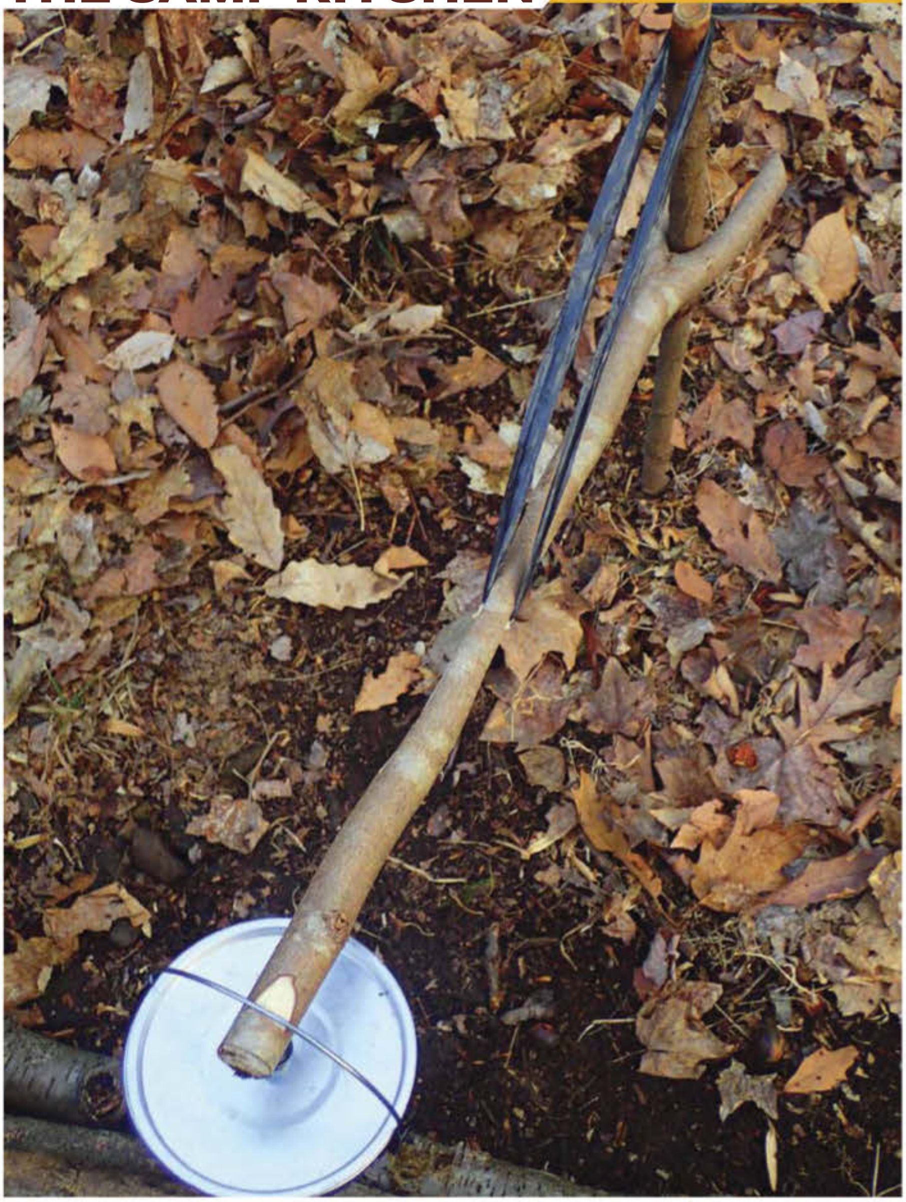
I used the bucksaw to make a cut that slanted to the right about halfway through the stick and then made one that slanted to the left. I made three of these a few inches apart from each other. With the Swiss Army Knife Camper saw, I cut down the middle of the two angled saw cuts to the same depth as the previous cuts.

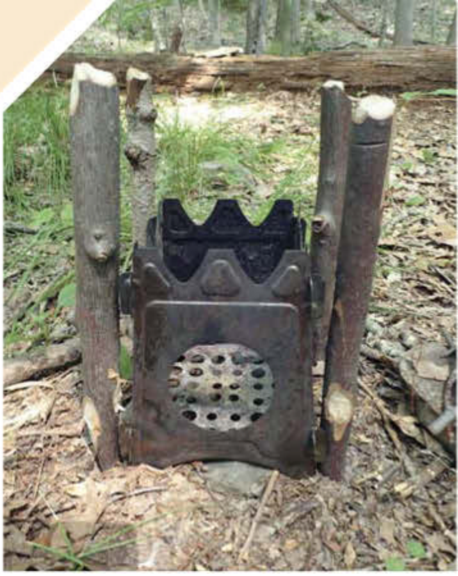
The side cuts outline the dovetail notch, and the center cut breaks up the wood fibers for easier prying. I used the bolo tip to pry out the wood from the notch, which should pop out easily. A fixed-blade knife can also be used; I just had the bolo on me. The dovetail fitting was last. I used the bolo to chop the three flat sides like a triangle and cleaned them with minimal carving. Since the end of my dovetail fitting has a small knot to keep the kettle from slipping off, I called the project done!

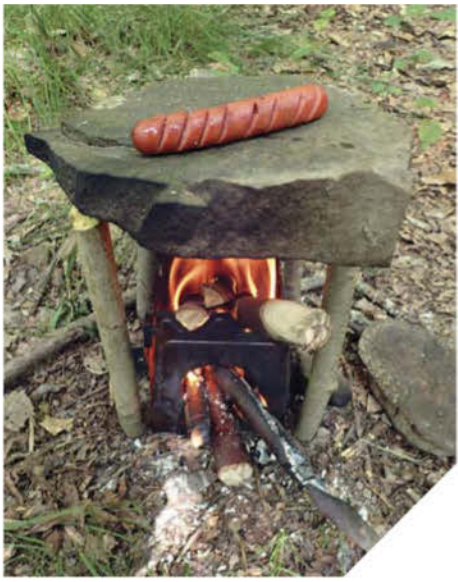
SUSPENDED STONE

Stone Age rock cooking with a modern twist—this may be an even older cook system than a tripod, dating back to the cave dwellers. Meat on a grill is the contemporary version of meat sizzling on a hot stone, in my opinion. The stone is usually placed over two logs or other large stones to allow room for a fire to be built beneath it. I like doing it that way in the colder months, as a larger, hotter fire is welcomed. However, who wants a big fire in the warm and humid months?

Late spring and summer stone cooking in my world is done using an Überleben Stöker Flatpack Stove. Cast iron and frying pans, in general, are heavy and bulky. Stones are, too, but they are Mother Nature's frying pans and are already there. I like to save weight, and if I can avoid toting a skillet, I do it whenever possible. I look for a flat, wide rectangular or square rock at least 2 inches thick but no more than 4 inches. Four broomstick-thick stakes need to be made; the greener the wood, the better.







With a knife, I make a stout chisel end and chamfer the tops to be driven into the ground and hold the stone—then it's time to rock!

I place the stone on the stove, center it, and mark where the stakes will go. I pound the stakes, leaving about 4 inches of space between the stove and the stone, and put the stone on them to check if they're level. Oil and eggs have a way of finding out just how even a stone is by dripping off. I test with water and make adjustments before making a fire. I always remove the stone and make a fire, building it until it's self-sustaining before placing the stone on the stakes. Then I walk away and wait to see if the stone cracks. While the stone heats up like cast iron, I prepare the food. A large stone requires more heat, and the space from the raised stone allows more fuel to be sticking up from the top.

When it's time to cook, I use the middle area and preserve the sides and outer areas as the relief zone to keep things warm. Use oil and fats just like with a pan.

Safety Note: Never use stones from waterways or seasonal creeks, as they can harbor moisture that causes cracks or explosions. Handle the cooking stone with leather gloves, as it will be hot. Try to wear eye protection like safety glasses or sunglasses around cook stones.

Above: The arm hangs suspended out over a small fire while a notch keeps the pot from sliding off into the fire.

Top, Right: When making the stone stand, mark the ground first and then add the stakes. Make adjustments before making the fire.

Center, Right: Make the fire before adding the stone. When it seems self-sustaining, add the stone while wearing gloves.

Bottom, Right: Test with some water to see if it is level, as round objects, oil, and eggs will always find out when it's too late. The raised stone allows more room to add significant fuel from the top.

“NEVER USE STONES FROM WATERWAYS OR SEASONAL CREEKS, AS THEY CAN HARBOR MOISTURE THAT CAUSES CRACKS OR EXPLOSIONS.”

ADVANCED HANGING ARM

This one may be a little more involved than the rigs mentioned above. While several versions of this type of arm hang off the central pole, this one I saw first from Dan Wowak on a Coalcracker Bushcraft video. This is a much more advanced and time-consuming pot-hanging system for people who like using their tools and making stuff.

This cooking system requires cordage, two sticks about 2 feet long, and each with about thumb thickness. One stick needs to be a Y stick. Although it's not part of the cooking system, a pilot stick is always recommended. Green wood is best for any type of cooking since it will be in close proximity to heat. Start with the Y stick and find the middle point, not counting the forked/Y-stick area. Carve two flats in the middle on the same side as the Y sticks to minimize the thickness and make it easier for the next step.

Above: These are the tools and wood pieces the author used for the dovetail rig.

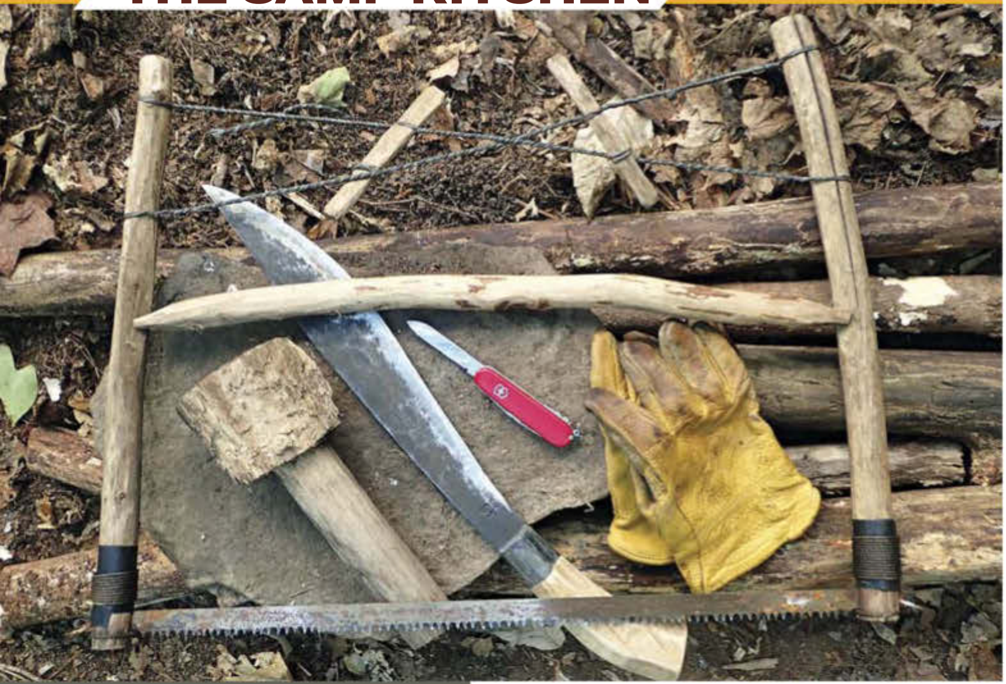
SOURCE

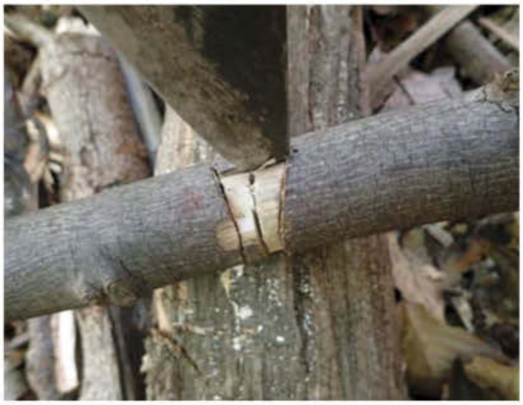
Coalcracker Bushcraft
CoalcrackerBushcraft.com
“Camp-Lore and Woodcraft” by Daniel Beard

LOW-HANGING TRIPOD

The tripod has a longstanding history as a robust structure with several outdoor applications. Tripods have been the go-to construction for smoking racks, drying racks, and cooking. According to most Scouts and survival manuals, tripods take a lot of wrapping, lashing, and frapping.

Unlike the traditional tripod, this one requires three sticks about a finger- to-broomstick thick. Two pieces should be about 2 feet long, and the third should be double their size. A small amount of cordage is needed to wrap around and tie the loosely bundled trio. Spin the longer stick once or twice; the cord must be on the loose side. The tension comes from spinning the stick, then spreading the smaller sticks, which will be the front legs. This system works well with a twig stove for boiling or stewing. It suspends narrow cooking containers like DIY Foster and soda can kettles that can't stand on a twig stove top.





THE PILOT STICK

When the ground is hard or frozen and good project pieces are at a premium, the pilot stick is a camper's best friend. Pounding wood for cooking rigs or stakes for shelters is harsh on materials. I learned in the southern states and in my own that making a pilot stick adds years to your fire reflectors, stakes for pole beds, wilderness furniture, and cooking rigs. These should be made from hardwoods like oak, hickory, maple, or sweetgum. Make them thick with a nice taper towards the end to accommodate different-sized holes. The top (hammer end) should be chamfered to take the most brutal pounding into the ground, thus saving your project pieces from taking the beating.

A pilot stick saves your final work from too much cracking and mushrooming. Besides, you need to keep your work looking suitable for posting on social media!

Above: The tip of a knife can be used to pry out the wood from the notch. The author used a bolo knife because he had it with him.

Top, Left: Tools used for the dovetail rig build. A bucksaw, Victorinox Camper, hand-forged bolo knife, maul, and leather gloves are indispensable tools.

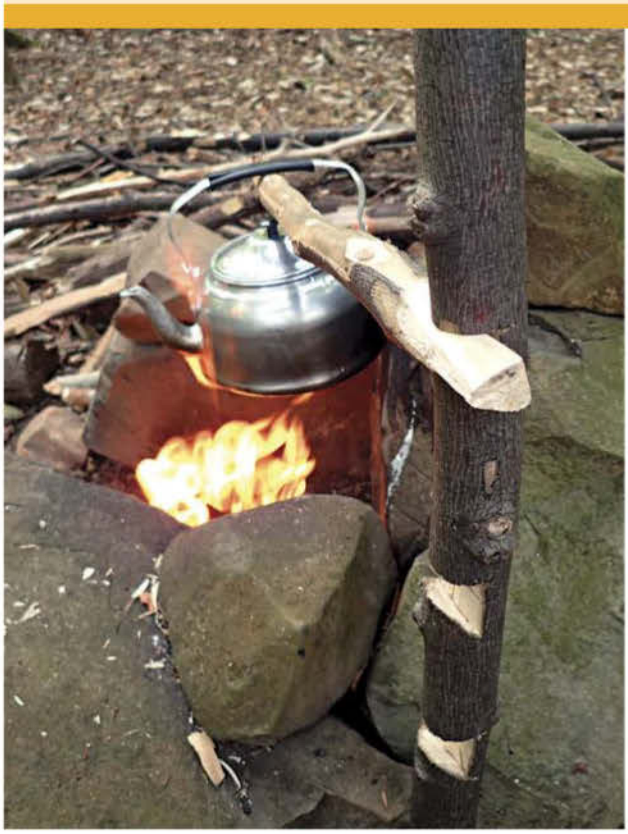
Top, Right: A Swiss Army Knife was used to clean up the notch but not to pry the chips out.

Bottom, Right: A Victorinox Camper saw was used to make the middle cut to help break up the wood fibers.

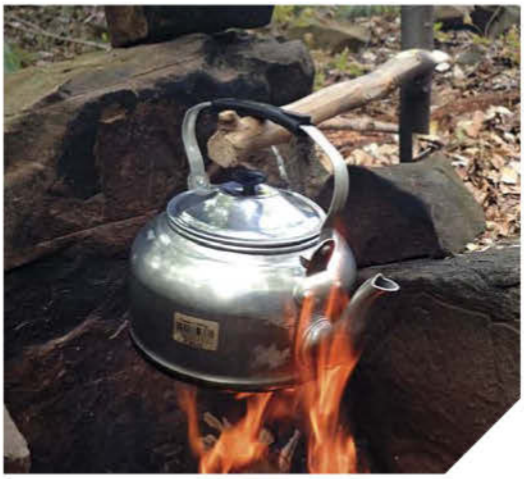
Now it's time to drill holes in each flat until they meet. This can be done like a knife-tip mortice notch used on a Try Stick with a fixed-blade knife or with a Swiss Army Knife. Dan used a gimlet in his video to drill a hole, while I used an awl. It wasn't just any awl; it was a Victorinox Swiss Army Knife awl on a Camper knife. I started with the awl and switched to the corkscrew to clean it up. Hammer the straight stick into the ground with the help of the pilot stick for minimal abuse on the straight stick.

Setting up this rig is a matter of putting some cordage through the hole and placing the Y portion of the stick onto the upright. Level out the Y stick, take the cord

> "THIS IS A MUCH MORE ADVANCED AND TIME-CONSUMING POT-HANGING SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE USING THEIR TOOLS AND MAKING STUFF."



Left: The dovetail rig with a kettle on the high setting when the flames are high. This dovetail rig has three settings.



Right: The front view of a dovetail cooking rig. The arm has a knot on the top end to keep pots and kettles from falling off.

around the top of the upright, and then angle it up about an extra inch to allow for stretch, then tie it off. A notch can be made with a saw or carved with a knife to hold the cord at the top. Finally, a V notch, saddle, or latch notch can be made on the end of the suspended Y stick to prevent cook pots or kettles from sliding off.

TIME TO GET COOKING

This type of cooking requires knife and fire skills to make a fire, notches, and stakes. Try some of these unorthodox cooking methods and put your skills to the test. As Dan Wowak would say, "Bushcrafting is all about coming out here, using your tools, and having a good time!" KI

F1 Wolf

We are pleased to present yet another new version of our bestseller F1, now with a blade in the new special steel Lam. VGWolf (VG7). The VG7 has unusually high tungsten content (1.25%) and that leads to better edge retention than most and is a little stronger.

Visit *www.fallkniven.com* for more information.

PRODUCT DETAILS:	F1nzWolf (VG7)
Total length (mm)	217
Blade length (mm)	100
Blade thickness (mm)	5
Weight (knife)	176 g
Blade profile	Convex
Steel	VG7
Hardness (HRC)	61
Handle material	Thermorun
Sheath	Zytel

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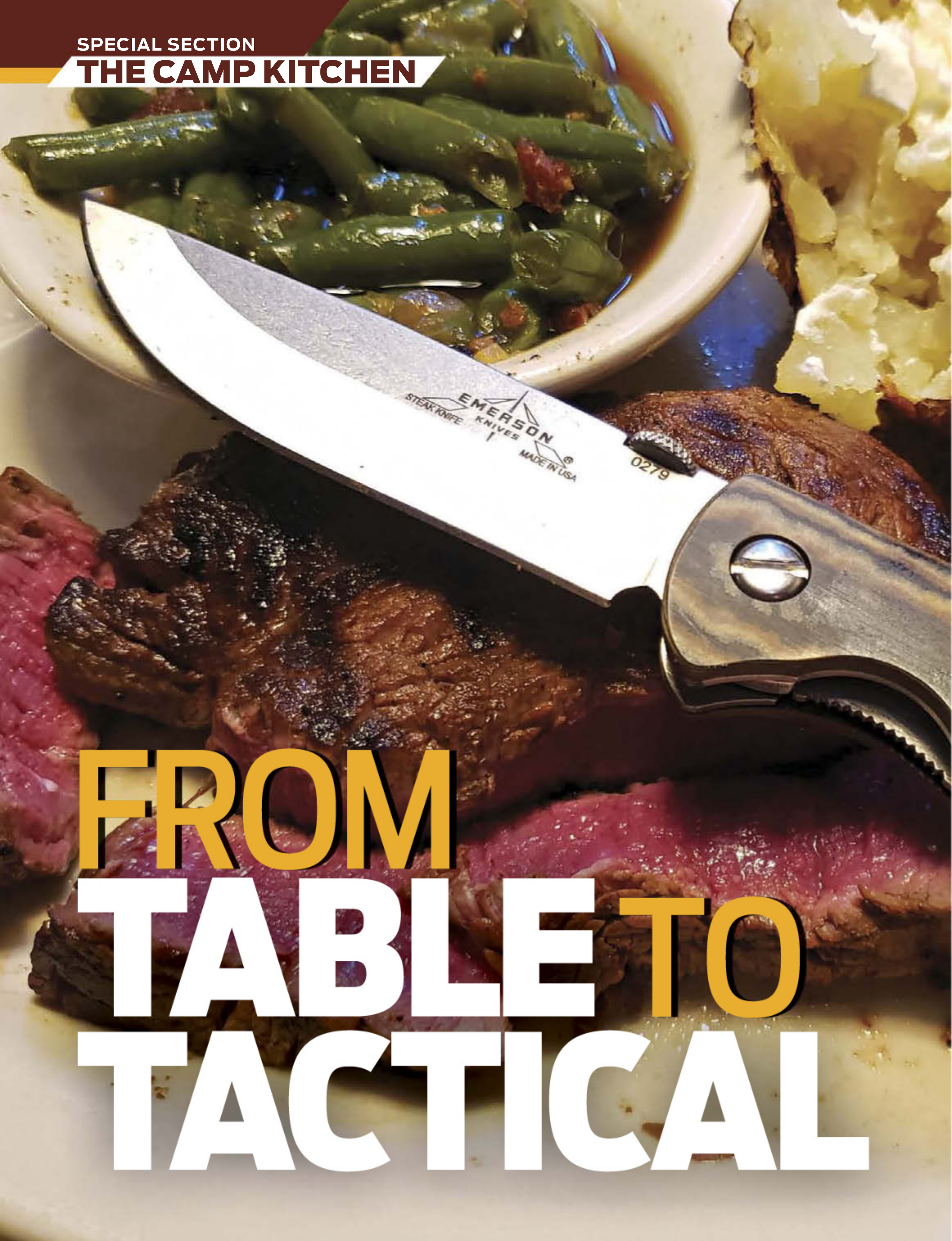
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FROM TABLE TO TACTICAL

REVIEW: EMERSON FOLDING STEAK KNIFE

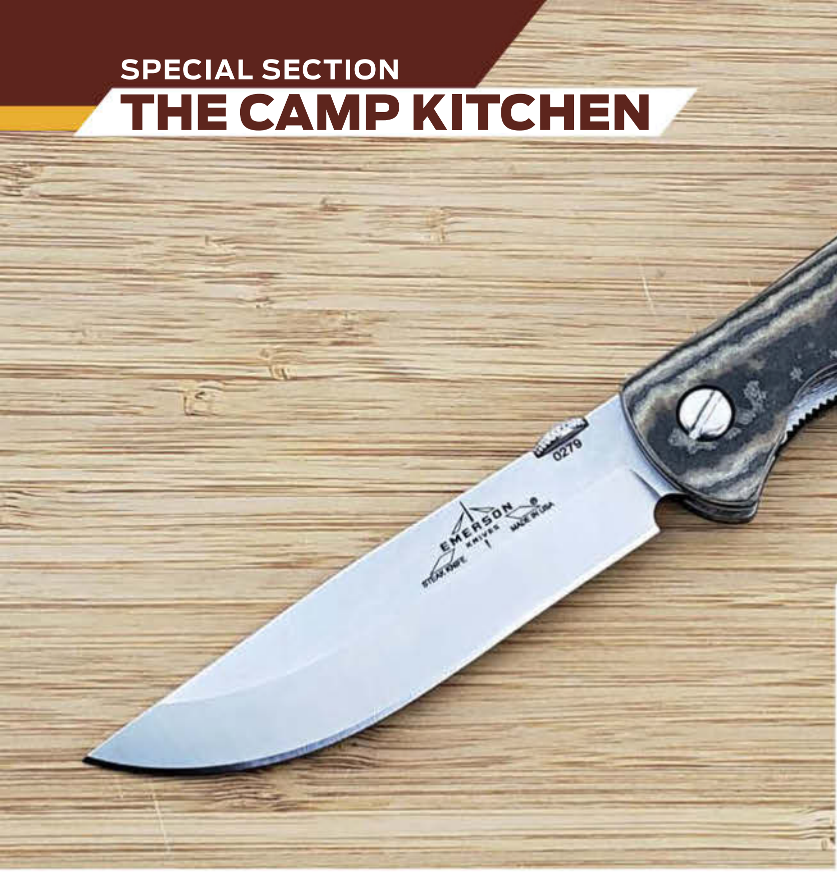
STORY AND PHOTOS BY TIM STETZER

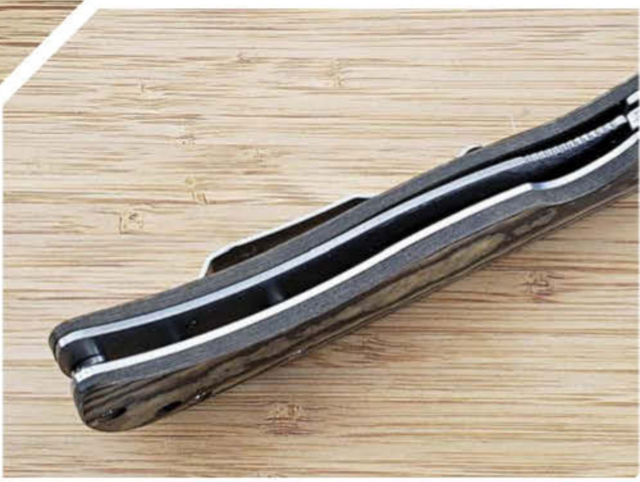
The Folding Steak Knife cut smoothly and cleanly through the fillet, much like a good carving knife would.

I suspect we've all been there: You're out to eat and you order a nice steak, only to have to saw through it with the crappy knife-shaped object that the restaurant provides. Your options are to persevere and continue to mangle your delectable entrée, or resort to your EDC knife, which you know will do a better job.

Honestly, I'm all for the latter and have done so on many an occasion, including at SHOT Show dinners in Las Vegas at some pretty high-end steak joints. With that said, depending on how scary your EDC knife is, you risk horrifying your date, the wait staff and the folks around you. To maintain domestic tranquility, and minimize law enforcement involvement during dinner, there has to be a better option.

Luckily there is, and Ernest Emerson has come up with it in the form of his Folding Steak Knife. The FSK, as I'm going to refer to it, gives you an option that will fulfill an EDC's role—even a tactical role—and still do a yeoman's job on your fillet without raising too many eyebrows at the dinner table.





Top, Left: The Emerson Steak Knife is a clean, folding rendition of Emerson's fixed-blade steak knife.

Above: Emerson uses titanium liners and Richlite scales on the Folding Steak Knife.

Bottom: Emerson uses an open-frame design that keeps debris from building up in the knife and that makes it easy to clean. An important consideration in a knife intended for use with food.

THE FOLDING STEAK KNIFE

As the name implies, this Emerson blade is a portable version of the ubiquitous carnivore's dinner tool. If the lines look familiar, it's probably because Emerson had a fixed-blade steak knife following the same lines that came before this. The Folding Steak Knife has a very similar design; it just turns into a folding package to make it a little easier to carry around.

The FSK has a 3.875-inch drop-point blade of 154CM stainless steel. It has a flat grind with a secondary bevel and comes in plain edge only. This model has no serrations; that would defeat the purpose of a clean-cutting meat-processing tool. An ambidextrous thumb disk is mounted to the spine of the blade.

The handle is a generously sized 4.875 inches and well contoured for comfort. The frame and liner lock are made of titanium for both strength and weight reduction. Handle scales are available in either black G10 or a brownish Richlite material. Richlite is a form of paper Micarta. Check out the sidebar for some more details on it, but know that it's attractive and comfortable in the hand. There's a pocket clip mounted for tip-up, right-hand carry. If you like left-hand carry, you can get the scales drilled and tapped for that option for an additional fee. There's also a lanyard hole near the pommel of the knife.

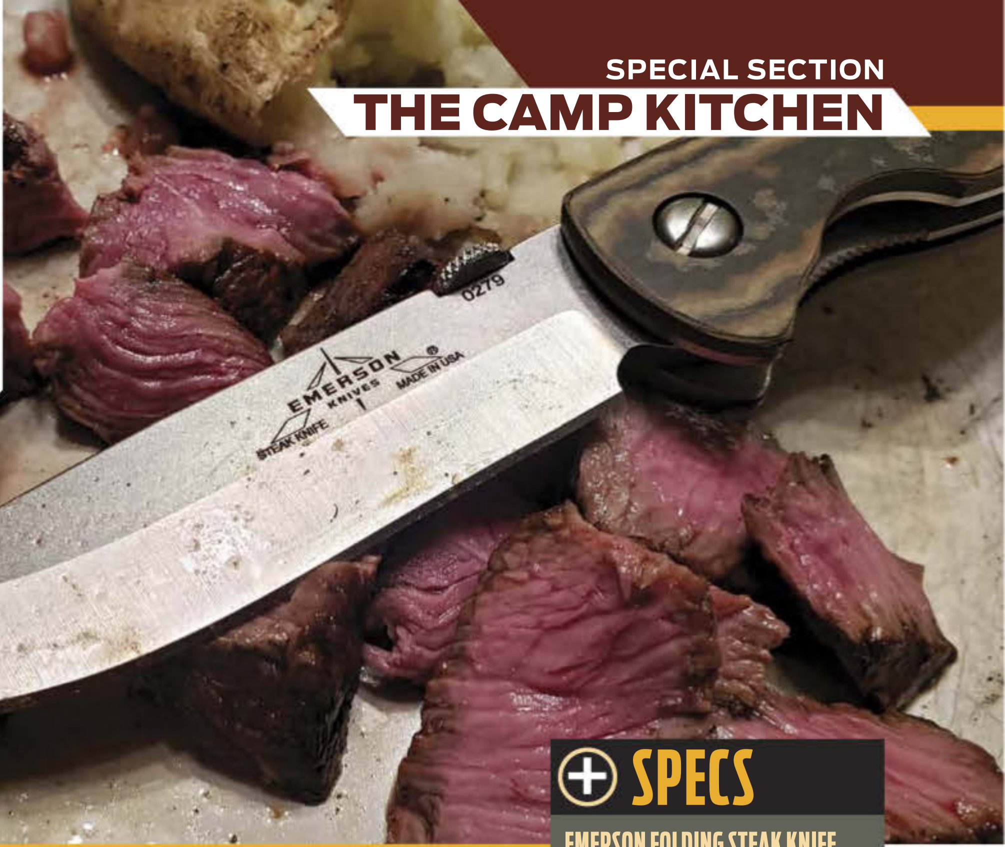
The FSK uses an open-frame design, which, in conjunction with its stainless steel and titanium construction, makes it easy to clean up. That's an important feature in a knife geared towards food processing.

THE TABLETOP REVIEW

It didn't take much to get me to do a proper field test on the Emerson Folding Steak Knife. I gave it the first run at home on some round steaks that my wife made for dinner shortly after I got the knife. It cut through these smaller, inch-thick-or-so steaks with no difficulty at all.

We typically use serrated Victorinox steak knives at home and, honestly, they work pretty well. With that said, I saw a noticeable difference with the Emerson. There was no sawing needed, simply firm, even pressure as the blade sliced cleanly through the steak. The edge held up fine, too, even with repeated contact with the ceramic plate. There was no edge deformation or dulling noticed. Not that I really expected it with this knife, but it was still worth checking.

The next run out was at an actual steak house. This was the test for a thicker fillet and also a public debut. Plus, it was an excuse for me to go out for steak—for science. I checked out the provided cutlery once we got seated and was slightly surprised to see that it was a Brazilian Tramontina steak knife. Better than the expected Chinese type, but still the same blunt-tip, thin, serrated model you'd otherwise expect. I used it to butter my rolls. With only a slight eye roll from my wife, I pulled out the Folding



> “THE EASE WITH WHICH THE BLADE GLIDED THROUGH THE BEEF, AND THE CONTROL I HAD WITH THE HANDLE REMINDED ME OF USING A FULL-SIZED CARVING KNIFE…”

Top, Left: The FSK is equipped with a good pocket clip setup for tip-up, right-hand carry.

Top, Right: The author conducted rigorous field testing of the Folding Steak Knife in its natural environment.

Left: Opening is by means of an ambidextrous thumb wheel mounted to the spine of the blade.

Bottom, Left: Lock-up is by means of a very solid titanium liner lock.

Steak Knife in preparation for my meal. Our waitress caught me taking pictures of my knife, but seemed unfazed. She probably knew their knives suck, too.

When my fillet arrived, I did a test cut and was pleased to see it was cooked perfectly: seared on the outside with a cool, rare center. I already knew the folder cut well, but when I was cutting up my steak, it hit me with what it reminded me of: a good carving knife. The ease with which the blade glided through the beef and the control I had with the handle reminded me of using a full-sized carving knife on a beef roast or turkey. To me, that was a perfect testament to the Emerson design. A pocket-sized

SPECS

EMERSON FOLDING STEAK KNIFE

Overall Length: 8.875 inches
Blade Length: 3.875 inches
Blade Width: 0.88 inch
Blade Thickness: 0.13 inch
Blade Material: 154CM
Blade Style: Drop point
Blade Grind: Flat
Finish: Stonewash
Edge Type: Plain
Handle Length: 4.875 inches
Handle Width: 1 inch
Handle Thickness: 0.58 inch
Handle Material: Black G10/Richlite
Frame/Liner: Titanium
Weight: 4.61 ounces
Pocket Clip: Tip-up
Knife Type: Manual
Opener: Thumb disk
Lock Type: Liner lock
Designer: Ernest Emerson
Origin: USA
MSRP: $274.95
Drill and tap for left-hand carry (+$25)
Add Richlite handles (+$60)

Top, Left: The author trying to figure out what to do with the salad they gave him at the steak house.

Top, Right: While designed with steak in mind, the Folding Steak Knife is still an Emerson and will hold its own in a defensive, tactical role.

knife that handled like a carver is right on point for what a Folding Steak Knife should be.

DAYS WITHOUT STEAK

As nice as that would be, we can't eat steak all of the time. So, unless you reserve your Emerson only for trips to the steak house, you're going to have it in your pocket for a lot of day-to-day activities, too. Although the FSK is a fair-sized knife, it has a relatively flat profile and carries easily in the pocket. The clip slides over the pocket lip easily and provides just the right amount of tension for good retention, yet makes the knife easy to draw. About ¾ inch of handle sticks up out of the pocket. This gives you something to grab onto when drawing the knife.

The Richlite scales not only look nice but also feel good in the hand. They're smooth, but the contours of the handle ensure you have a solid, comfortable grip. There's a warmth to them as well that reminds me more of wood than of a composite. The opening disk was something I haven't worked with much before. I am more used to a hole, traditional thumb studs or a flipper. It took a little practice to roll the blade open with one smooth motion, but it's just a matter of getting used to it. It's a great ambidextrous opening option and low profile.

The titanium liner lock engages solidly when you open the blade. I can't detect any blade play of any kind. It's a typical right-hand-oriented lock, but I didn't have any issue disengaging it with my left hand either, although this did involve rolling the knife to the side a bit to get to the lock. If you're a lefty, you're probably used to it.

Although there's a slight drop to the point, the blade profile reminded me a lot of a Scandinavian Puukko, meant for camp-type tasks. I actually felt that the FSK handled much like one. It's a great size for a folding hunter or woods knife and would fill that role nicely. It should go without saying that the FSK can still work as a tactical knife as well. It's fast to deploy, rugged and has a great edge. It's an Emerson, after all.

AFTER-ACTION REPORT

So, did the Folding Steak Knife live up to its mission statement? I'm going to say absolutely. It worked great on steaks and did so without causing any commotion at the steak house. The place was packed when we went, and we waited forever to get in. Even in close quarters with folks right on top of us, no one—including our waitress, numerous other wait staff and a manager—either noticed or was alarmed by the Emerson sitting on the table. I also think it's worth it to upgrade to the Richlite handles, as they have a less "tactical" look than black G10, and they're nice scales to boot.

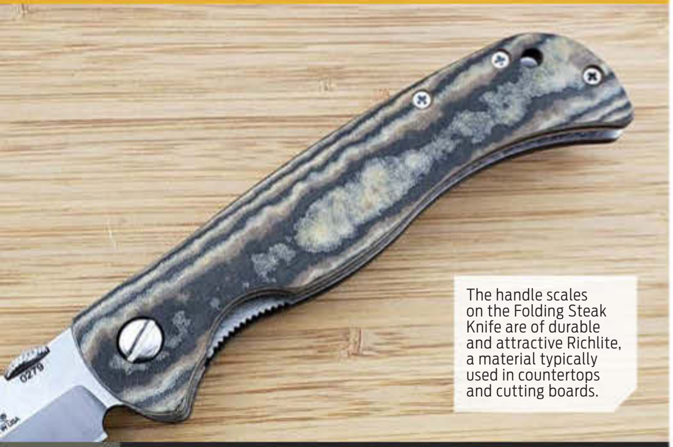
> "IF YOU'RE A FOODY AND APPRECIATE FINE CUTLERY THAT WON'T MANGLE YOUR DINNER, THEN THE EMERSON FOLDING STEAK KNIFE IS JUST THE TOOL FOR YOU."

If you're a foody and appreciate fine cutlery that won't mangle your dinner, then the Emerson Folding Steak Knife is just the tool for you. Perfect for dinner at 6:00 while still capable of fending off muggers at 7:00. **KI**

SOURCES

Emerson Knives, Inc.
1234 254th Street
Harbor City, CA 90710
310-539-5633
EmersonKnives.com

Richlite
Richlite.com



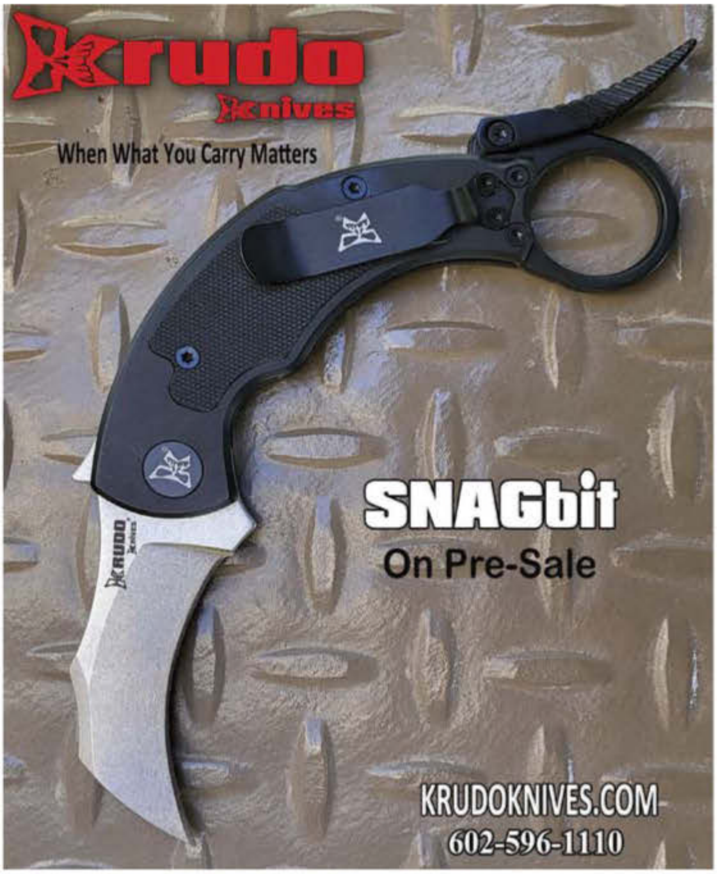
The handle scales on the Folding Steak Knife are of durable and attractive Richlite, a material typically used in countertops and cutting boards.

WHAT THE HECK IS RICHLITE?

If you already know what Richlite is, then you're one up on me. I had to look it up. It turns out that Richlite is nothing new. In fact, it's been around since 1943. It just hasn't been used much with knives. Richlite is traditionally a material used for countertops and cutting boards.

In composition, it's essentially a paper Micarta. According to Richlite, the material is made up of layers of high-quality, recycled, engineered paper that's infused with thermosetting resin. The stacks of infused paper are hand-laid with the direction of the paper fibers alternating, which adds strength and texture to the material. The paper stacks are then pressed under heat and pressure to bond the layers of paper together. The panels are then left to cure and cool, creating a sheet of dense, solid material. The material is similar to the PaperStone that Buck uses, or other paper Micartas more commonly seen in knife handles. The exact formula of each material differs a bit but it's the same family of product. It makes for an extremely durable material with impressive high-impact resistance.

The Richlite that Emerson uses has a distinctive look with its layered appearance and contrasting lighter and darker layers. It's smooth, but there's a subtle texture to it that gives a secure feel in the hand. There's also warmth to it that seems closer to a wood product than to a synthetic one to me. I guess that makes sense being that it's made with a paper product. The use of Richlite over other more common handle materials is an interesting choice by Emerson, but I think it is a good one. It's an attractive product that should hold up well and, considering its kitchen-related lineage, seems like a perfect fit for a steak knife.



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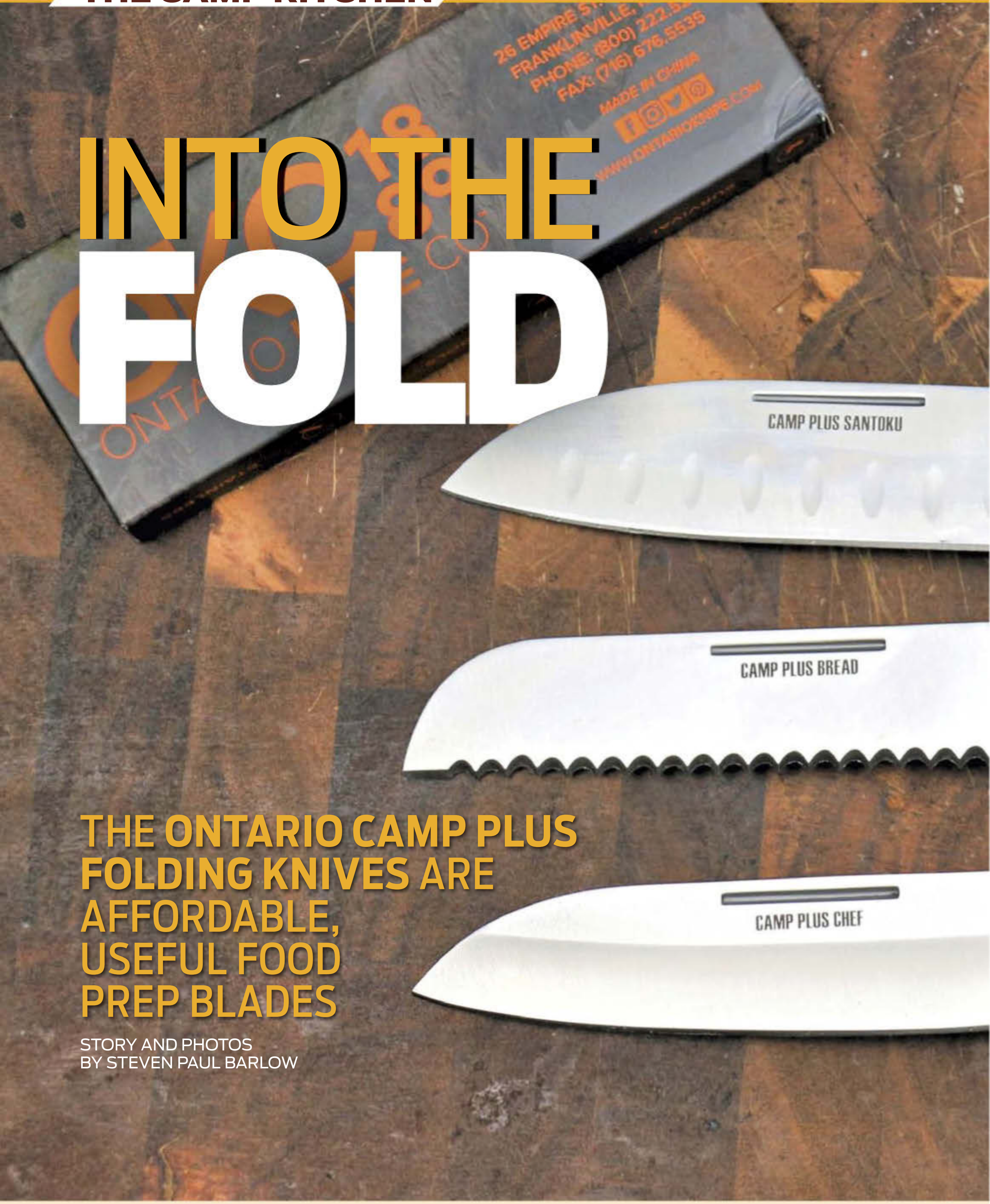
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INTO THE FOLD

THE ONTARIO CAMP PLUS FOLDING KNIVES ARE AFFORDABLE, USEFUL FOOD PREP BLADES

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY STEVEN PAUL BARLOW

Food prep can get messy. That's especially true when I'm handling the kitchen chores. Normally, fixed blades are the right choice for such work. And, normally, it pays to invest in the best kitchen knives you can afford. Otherwise, over time you'll end up with a drawer full of dull, bent and broken knives that cost in total what you could have paid for a half dozen quality knives that could last a lifetime.

The Camp Plus series from the Ontario Knife Company includes a chef's knife, a santoku and a bread knife.

CAMP PLUS KNIFE COMPANY
SANTOKU
CAMP PLUS SANTOKU

CAMP PLUS KNIFE COMPANY
BREAD KNIFE
CAMP PLUS BREAD

Top, Left: The santoku includes a set of scallops or indentations on each side of the blade designed to help keep food from sticking to the blade.

Above: The bread knife has a finely serrated edge. The author likes to have at least one serrated blade in his kitchen kit at all times.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Top, Right: The chef's knife proved to be a very capable knife for all-around camp kitchen work.

Center, Right: The glass-filled nylon handles on these knives are simple, rugged and sufficiently grippy.

Bottom, Right: The author used a military surplus collapsible bowl as a container for the chopped veggies that went into his stew.

AFFORDABLE FOLDERS

The exception for me is in a camp kitchen where very little is normal because that's where I'm the chief cook and bottle washer. Lately, I've been trying out the three folding knives from the Ontario Knife Company (OKC) that comprise the company's Camp Plus series. The series includes a chef's knife, a santoku and a bread knife that can perform well and can be purchased separately for—this is no typo—$12.95 each.

When car camping or in hunting camp, I bring along a plastic tub with a lid that contains most of the accessories I use for my portable kitchen. But when I'm tired and hungry, and it's getting dark after a long day in the woods or on the water, I don't want to get stung by the sharp side of a blade when I stick my hand into that container to retrieve something in a hurry. Space is limited in that container, too.

So, for a camp kitchen kit, I've found that a set of folding knives can be a plus. Take into account, too, that I'm no master chef preparing meals for elite clientele in a fancy restaurant. I don't need highly specialized knives. I do, however, like to make an extra effort to eat well in camp these days. Rarely now do I simply open a can of something I brought along because I happen to have found it in my cupboard at home. That might have sufficed when I was younger, but I'm out to enjoy the total experience these days and good meals are part of that.

So, I need to have knives handy for the camp meals I prepare, but I need them to store in a small space. I don't want to keep expensive cutlery in my kitchen kit that might spend many idle weeks between outings. I also don't want to bring expensive cutlery that might get neglected during a trip or abused if I put them to work on other camp chores. I don't want to worry about them getting lost or stolen, either.

SOME DETAILS

Each of these Ontario Camp Plus models is a lock-back folder with AUS-8 stainless steel blade and a green, glass-filled nylon handle with suitable texturing for a sure-handed grip. The blades are smaller than what you'd find on the typical chef's knife, santoku or bread knife you'd use at home. Each Camp Plus knife blade is 4.25 inches long. That's plenty long enough for my needs, opening food packages, chopping veggies and slicing meat.

The chef's knife and santoku are very similar in profile, but the chef's knife has a hollow grind, while the santoku features a flat grind with the addition of vertical relief cuts on the sides of the blade that could be an aid in slicing food that tends to stick to the blade. The bread knife has fine serrations and is a good third knife in the series, as a serrated blade can come in handy for more than just slicing bread.

PUT TO THE TEST

I began testing these knives last fall. The great thing about testing food prep blades is that you get to have a good meal at the end of it. Each year, my brother, nephew and I set up an outfitter's tent on state land for the duration of the deer season. We keep food out of the tent so as not to attract annoying critters. For our camp kitchen, we erect a tarp over a folding table where I set up my old Coleman two-burner stove.

CAMP PLUS
ONTARIO KNIFE COMPANY
CHEF KNIFE
CAMP PLUS CHEF

CAMP PLUS CHEF

> **“I PUT THE ONTARIO CAMP PLUS KNIVES TO WORK PREPARING THE INGREDIENTS FOR MAKING A DUTCH OVEN BEEF STEW.”**

I also make good use of our fire pit, where I might grill meat or bake things in my cast iron Dutch ovens.

It can get quite chilly during the hunting season, so hot and hearty meals are welcome. I put the Ontario Camp Plus knives to work preparing the ingredients for making a Dutch oven beef stew. This time, I used charcoal briquettes as my heat source.

I brought two strip steaks in a cooler for the stew and found them still frozen when it was

SPECS

ONTARIO CAMP PLUS BREAD KNIFE

Overall Length: 9.51 inches
Blade Length: 4.25 inches
Blade Material: AUS-8 stainless steel
Handle Material: Glass-filled nylon
Locking Mechanism: Back lock
Other: Folding knife
MSRP: $12.95

ONTARIO CAMP PLUS CHEF KNIFE

Overall Length: 9.51 inches
Blade Length: 4.25 inches
Blade Material: AUS-8 stainless steel
Handle Material: Glass-filled nylon
Locking Mechanism: Back lock
Other: Folding knife
MSRP: $12.95

ONTARIO CAMP PLUS SANTOKU

Overall Length: 9.51 inches
Blade Length: 4.25 inches
Blade Material: AUS-8 stainless steel
Handle Material: Glass-filled nylon
Locking Mechanism: Back lock
Other: Folding knife
MSRP: $12.95

time to ready them for the oven. This proved no problem for these Ontario knives, which sliced easily through the rock-hard meat. I placed the chunks of steak into the bottom of one Dutch oven with a little water, Worcestershire sauce and steak seasoning. I placed that oven directly into the coals to brown the meat.

While the meat was cooking, I alternated between the chef's knife and santoku in cutting carrots, small potatoes, celery and onions into bite-sized chunks. I chose creamer potatoes that are about the size of ping pong balls because they needed only to be sliced into two and left unpeeled because the skin is so thin. I also added a one-pound package of frozen peas.

When the meat was cooked, I added the chopped vegetables, powdered beef gravy mix and some water. I put the recessed lid on the oven and placed coals on the lid so that I was baking from above and below. I then stacked a second oven on top of the first. It contained precut biscuits in a nine-inch cake pan on top of a cooling tray inside the Dutch oven. I then added coals to the top of that second Dutch oven.

The biscuits were done in about 25 minutes. But as the outside temperature was in the mid-20s F, I had to light a second load of charcoal in the starter cylinder to ensure the potatoes and carrots in the stew were thoroughly cooked. I pushed a few of the coals off to the side and started a campfire to keep myself warm as the stew cooked.

The knives cleaned up easily. I might add a bent paper clip and some gun cleaning patches to my kitchen kit to reach into the inner parts of the knife handles should food become lodged in them. Knives washed and then immediately dried, I didn't have to worry about the formation of rust. I could wipe each blade with a

Above: The author used the OKC Camp Plus knives to prepare the ingredients for his Dutch oven beef stew.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Top, Left: The author took his knife testing on the road to his temporary deer camp last fall to see how they'd perform in field conditions.

Top, Right: To make the most efficient use of his coals, the author stacked the two Dutch ovens one atop the other.

Bottom: The author has made cakes, cobblers, stews, roasts and his nearly indigestible cheesy chili mac and beef in Dutch ovens over the years.

> “I ALTERNATED BETWEEN THE CHEF’S KNIFE AND SANTOKU IN CUTTING CARROTS, SMALL POTATOES, CELERY AND ONIONS INTO BITE-SIZED CHUNKS.”

vegetable oil-soaked cloth if I was concerned about that at all.

Over the next couple of weeks, I used all three knives, including the bread knife, in my home kitchen for whatever food prep tasks presented themselves. The knives started out sufficiently sharp and I haven’t seen the need to touch up the edges yet. The textured handles worked well dry or wet in my warm kitchen or my cold camp. I always felt in complete control with my grip on these knives.

I was initially concerned because even though the handles are long and wide enough, they are also very thin. But as I said, I’m usually cooking for a small family group, not an entire restaurant, so I wasn’t performing any protracted tasks where I would have preferred beefier handles that fill the palm.

Top: The author's beef stew is ready to be cooked in the coals.

Above: To go with the stew, the author baked some biscuits, half of which he ate before the stew was finished cooking.

WORTHWHILE EXPENSE

For less than $39, you can own all three of these knives that can serve you well in your camp kitchen. You really can't go wrong at that price. Drop them into your kitchen kit and keep them there for your next outing. Because they fold, they won't damage other contents of your kit and they won't poke you when you're rummaging around for your salt shaker or spatula. I would like to see Ontario add a narrow, pointy paring knife to the series. I have a tasty baked apple recipe and a paring knife would come in handy when preparing that. **KI**

SOURCE

Ontario Knife Company (OKC)
OntarioKnife.com

PUTTING TOGETHER A PORTABLE CAMP KITCHEN

Elsewhere in this issue, Reuben Bolieu gives you some great ideas on how to put together a camp kitchen from scratch, using little more than a bushcraft blade, maybe a saw and materials he finds in the woods.

For many of my outings—summer camping trips with the family and deer camp in the fall—I'm staying close to my vehicle, so I can afford to bring a more elaborate camp kitchen setup.

As I mentioned earlier, I have a plastic bin with a top that contains most of my kitchen accessories. Inside there are two smaller plastic bins, one inside the other, that help to organize the contents and serve double duty as my wash and rinse basins. There's a set of three nesting cook pots of various sizes with lids that also serve as frying pans. I have utensils for at least five people, a large plastic spoon and a plastic spatula.

For knives, I now have these Ontario Camp Plus folding knives in my kit, along with an Attleboro Knives Gramps model that is a combination knife and fork that is great for moving things about on a grill.

I have a resealable plastic bag that contains some basic seasonings: salt, pepper, garlic salt, chili powder and all-purpose seasoning. Another bag in the bin contains my dishwashing kit with scouring sponge, bottle of liquid soap and a plastic scraper in case I'm overly exuberant with the heat when cooking. I have pot holders, and a couple of super-absorbent microfiber towels, too. Rounding out the kitchen kit are a set of thin plastic dishes, some steel mugs and a military surplus collapsible bowl.

For a camp stove, I have used the same Coleman dual-fuel two-burner stove for about 35 years and I see no reason to change now. We're old friends. It uses no throw-away propane canisters and I can use unleaded gasoline to fuel it in a pinch. For grilling, most times I bring along just a grill top to place across a couple hunks of firewood. I have also used a tabletop kettle-style charcoal grill at times.

I have an old-style coffee percolator that I use for coffee in the morning and, after removing the innards, heating water any time for hot cocoa, instant oatmeal or dishwater. The cast iron cookware I use on any particular trip depends on the menu. If the meals are going to be more elaborate, I might bring one or two of my Dutch ovens (the kind with integral legs on the bottom). Other times, I might bring only a skillet or frying pan.

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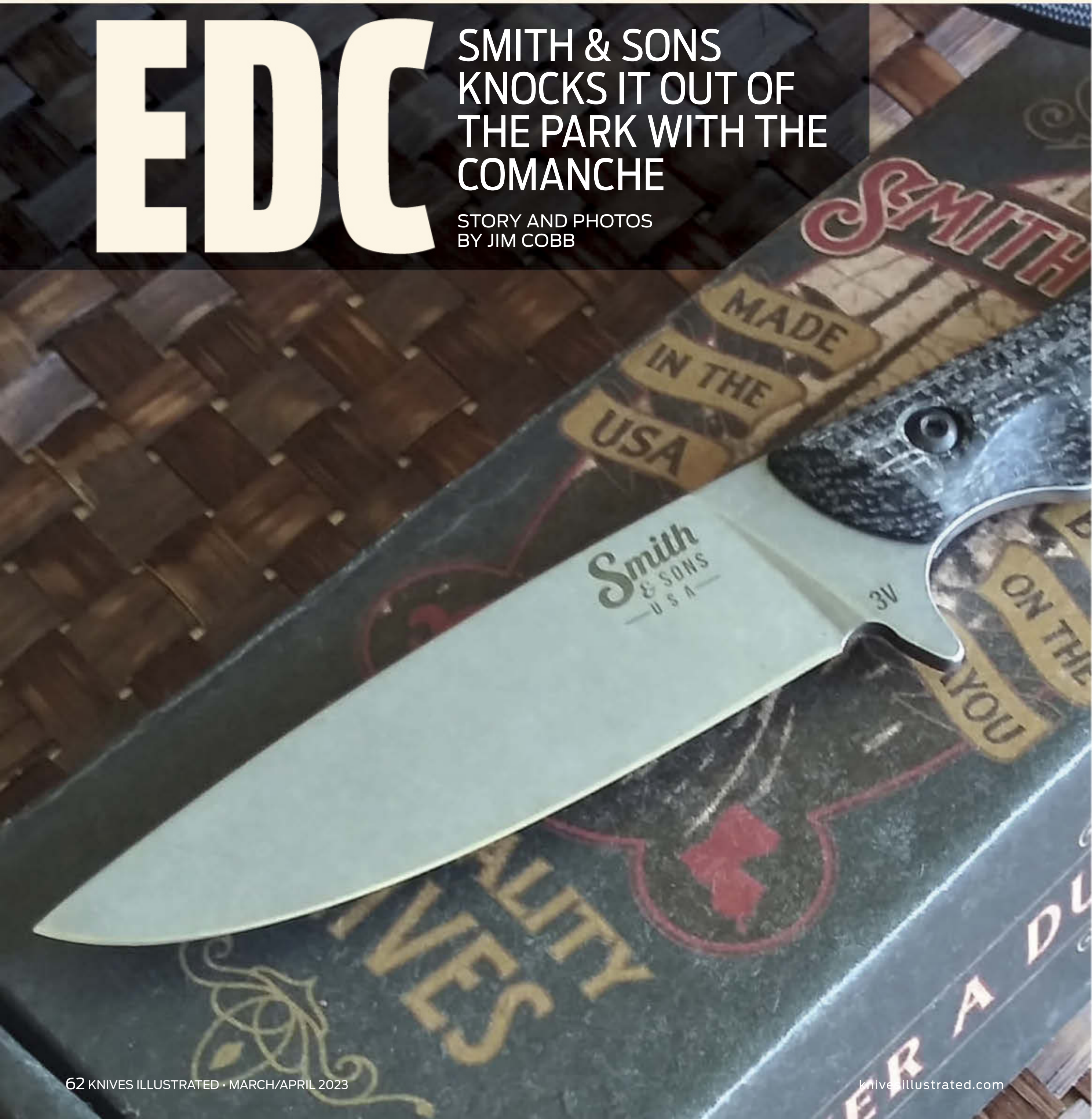
AN AWESOME EDC

SMITH & SONS KNOCKS IT OUT OF THE PARK WITH THE COMANCHE

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY JIM COBB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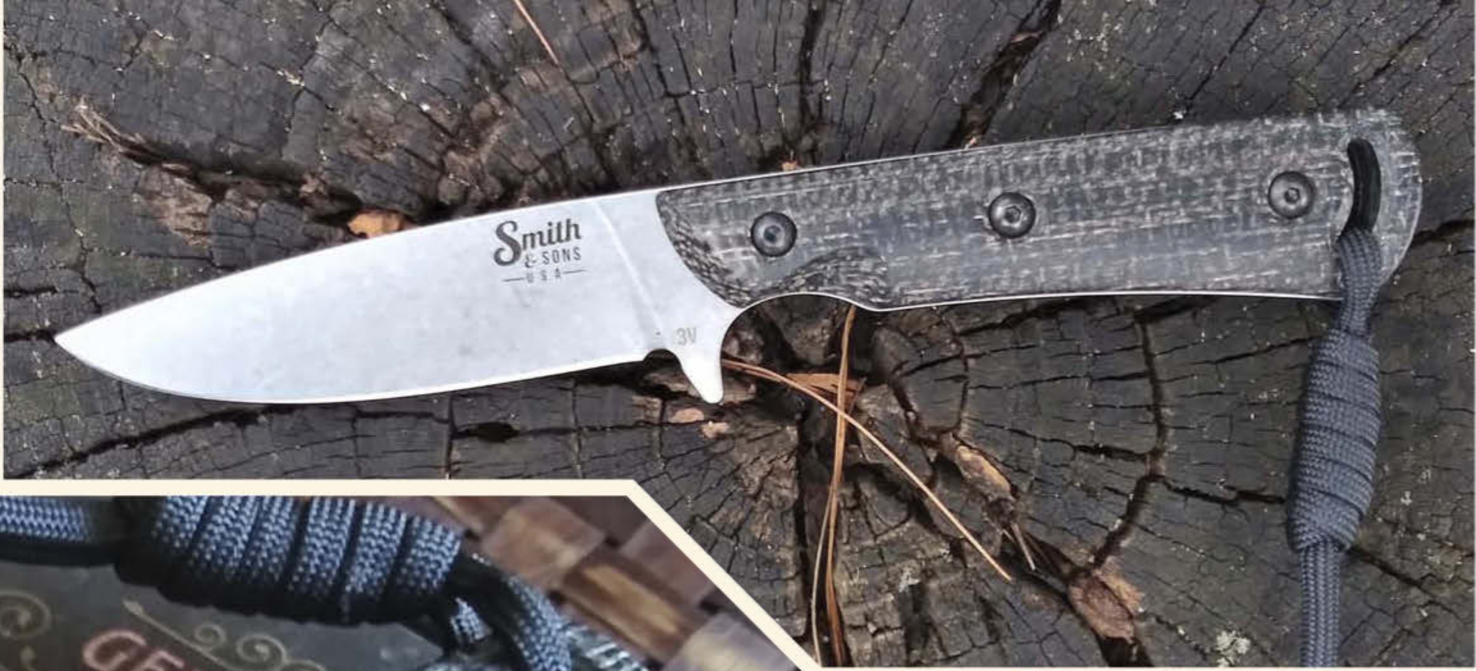

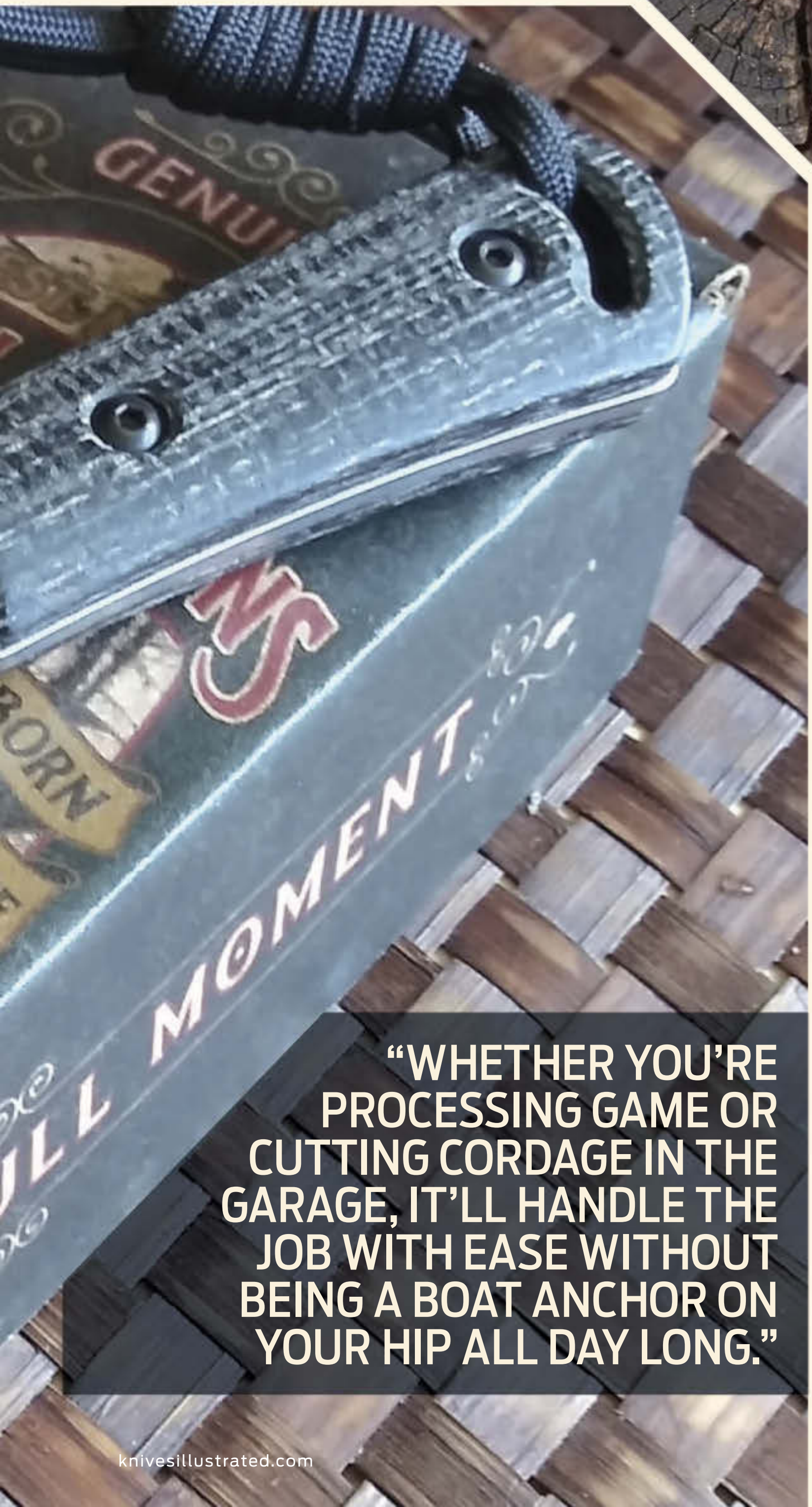

There's something to be said for a small fixed-blade knife. For most people, it'll see far more use than a larger knife, given the ease of carry if nothing else. I mean, if we're being honest, there's little need for a Crocodile Dundee Bowie knife when it comes to breaking down boxes or cutting up sausage and fruit for lunch, right?

The Comanche from Smith & Sons Knives fills the EDC role quite nicely. Whether you're processing game or cutting cordage in the garage, it'll handle the job with ease without being a boat anchor on your hip all day long.

> "WHETHER YOU'RE PROCESSING GAME OR CUTTING CORDAGE IN THE GARAGE, IT'LL HANDLE THE JOB WITH EASE WITHOUT BEING A BOAT ANCHOR ON YOUR HIP ALL DAY LONG."

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

We need to start by talking about the packaging. While a fancy box is no guarantee regarding the quality of the knife inside, I do appreciate a company or knifemaker who goes the extra mile and provides something more than the standard white cardboard box. In the case of Smith & Sons, the box is black and has some great artwork, sort of an old-timey font advertising the company. The bottom of the box has some information about Smith & Sons, chiefly that this is a family-owned and operated endeavor that grew from a hobby to a business.

But, does the knife warrant the fancy box? Let's take a closer look.

The Comanche is available in four different handle materials:

- Black Burlap Micarta
- OD Green Canvas Micarta
- Natural Canvas Micarta
- Zydeco Richlite

I chose Black Burlap for mine, primarily because I didn't have a knife with that handle material yet, but also because it is quite handsome.

SMITH & SONS KNIVES

Smith & Sons was founded in 2011, when it transitioned from being just a fun hobby to a full-time company. From the beginning, its focus has been on providing knives that blend form and function, with a commitment to superior fit and finish, excellent craftsmanship, and attention to detail.

One of the things I appreciate the most about this company's philosophy is that the people there recognize that a knife, while an incredibly important asset, has its limitations.

As stated on the website, "Smith & Sons Knives are not intended for use as a screwdriver, pry-bar, chisel, punch, hammer, or weapon. There are plenty of other tools out there that perform these tasks better than knives do!"

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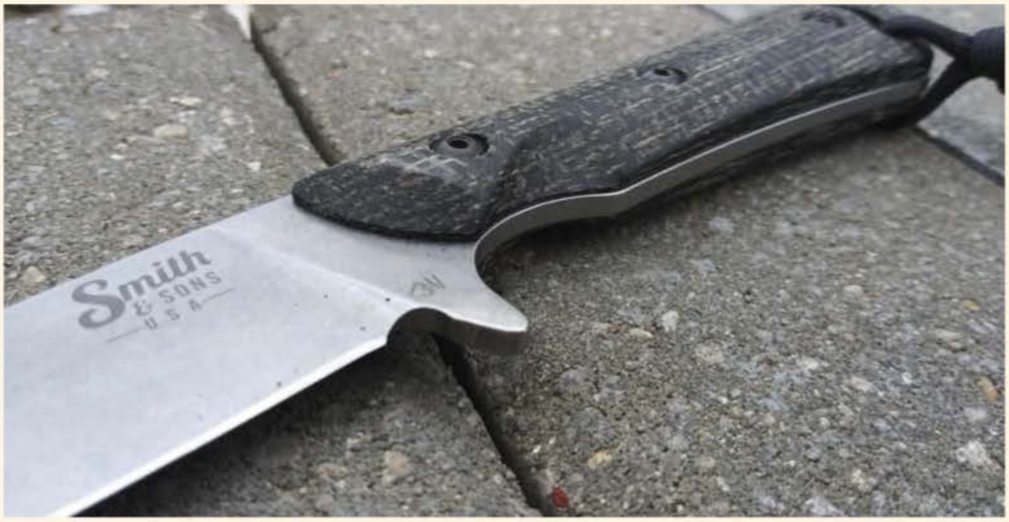

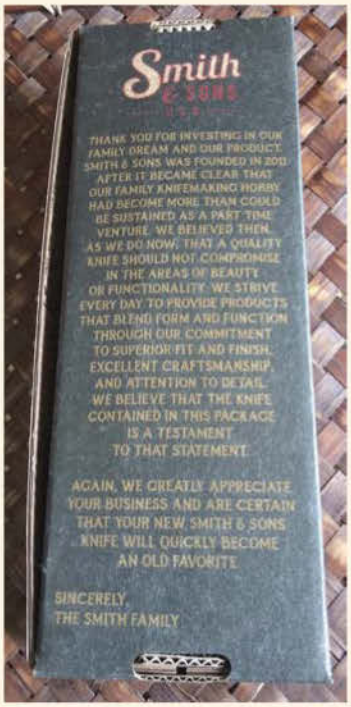
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Top, Right: The work put into the design of the box is an excellent indication of how much work was put into the design of the Comanche inside.

Bottom: The integral guard works well to keep fingers away from the blade's edge without being uncomfortable.

Left: The back of the box provides some information about the Smith family and their knife company.

In taking the knife from the box and removing the cardboard sleeve from the blade, the first thing I noticed was the sharpness of the edge. The Comanche is easily one of the very sharpest knives right out of the box that I've ever had. With some knives, they have a good edge, but you're compelled to touch them up a bit on a strop before you put them to any real use. There's no way I could improve on the Comanche's factory edge.

The handle is, as noted, Black Burlap Micarta. It has just enough texture for some grip traction, though it is smoother than its appearance would suggest. While the scales are rounded from top to bottom, the only real contouring is just behind the guard to provide an indexing groove. It is present on both sides of the knife, making it ambidextrous.

There is a lanyard slot at the base of the handle, and the Comanche comes with a paracord lanyard attached to it. It is more decorative than functional, but still, it is a nice touch. More on this lanyard setup in a bit.

An integral guard keeps fingers from sliding up from the handle to the sharp edge. There's no jimping on the spine. From end to end, the back of the knife has a slight curve, which serves to increase cutting power.

The knife is made of 3V steel and has been given a stonewashed finish. Personally, I'm not big on mirror-polished knives and much prefer a stonewashed or satin finish.

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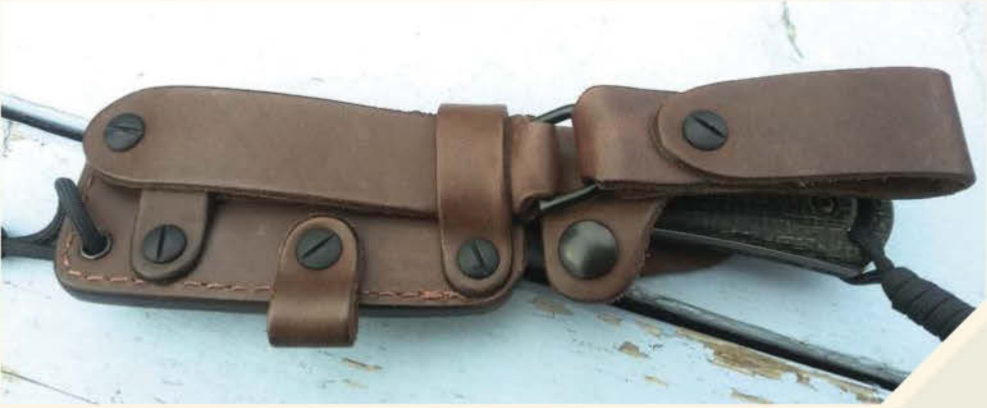
3V



Top: The Comanche comes with a lanyard attached to the knife, though if it were on an extended tang, it might be a bit more comfortable.

Center: The Comanche has a drop-point blade profile and a stonewashed finish.

Bottom: The Adventure Carry sheath can be used in a variety of configurations.

I asked Alex Smith of Smith & Sons about the design scheme of the Comanche.

"The Comanche was initially designed as the logical next step for our bushcraft line after the runaway success of our Brave model," he said. "While the Brave remains as popular as ever, some of our customers suggested we push the design even further with added handle length, unobtrusive finger protection, a robust multi-carry leather sheath, and the same focus on simplicity and utility. A comprehensive design and prototyping process ensued, and when we were satisfied, the Comanche was born!"

That brings us to the sheath. Two sheath options are available. There is a fairly standard vertical-carry, pouch-style sheath. Or, you can go with what they're calling the Adventure Carry sheath, which is the option I chose. It comes configured with a dangler. Or, you can forgo the dangler, and the sheath can be strapped to the belt either vertically or horizontally. There's a small loop for a ferrocerium rod up to 3/8 inch in diameter, which is always a nice feature. The knife is secured in the sheath by a wide strap with a snap in it. At the bottom of the sheath is a lanyard hole, and it comes with a long paracord lanyard attached to it.

BUT HOW DOES IT PERFORM?

I've had the Comanche for a couple of months now and have carried it on some hikes as well as around the house when working inside and out. The first thing I noticed was that the sheath carries a bit differently than others, at least as far as the dangler is concerned. With other dangler-type sheaths I've used, the knife handle rests about where the dangler attaches to the sheath, so it ends up with the top of the knife resting on the upper thigh. With this Adventure Carry sheath, the knife handle is nearly even with the top of the dangler. In other words, with the dangler, it carries nearly identical to how it would with a normal vertical sheath, just a bit more flexible for when you're moving around or driving. This isn't a bad thing at all, as far as I'm concerned.

However, if you have fantasies of tying the bottom of the sheath to your leg, à la some sort of Old West gunslinger, think again. Unless you have an especially short pelvis, doing so will probably be more than a bit uncomfortable.

The knife itself has great ergonomics. It is comfortable in hand, and I didn't experience any hot spots or other discomfort when using the knife for a variety of chores. I have large hands and the handle has just enough real estate for a four-finger grip. However, if I had my druthers, I'd have put the lanyard attachment point on an exposed tang. With the current design, I found that the lanyard rubbed against my hand, no matter where I put the lanyard loop. I'm not overly fond of lanyards on my knives anyway, so this isn't a deal breaker for me.

I liked that the point of the knife is sharp, but not a needle point. This gave it some strength when used for boring holes, without my fearing the tip would end up bent or otherwise damaged.

Being CPM-3V, the knife is well suited for outdoor pursuits. While it isn't a stainless steel, it has pretty good corrosion resistance. To be a true stainless steel, it has to have at least 12% chromium in the mix and 3V has 7.5%.

EXCELLENT U.S.-MADE PRODUCT

The only strike against the Comanche, from where I'm standing, is the placement of the lanyard attachment. But this is a very minor quibble and in the grand scheme of things is hardly worth mentioning.

In my experience with the Comanche, Smith & Sons is definitely doing something right as I didn't have any problems with rust, pitting, or other issues. It also held an amazing edge throughout the entire evaluation period. I love that the company is a family-run business providing a great product made in the United States. **KI**

DLT EXCLUSIVE

The Comanche in 3V is exclusive to DLT Trading. It cannot be purchased elsewhere. I asked Smith & Sons how this collaboration came about and Alex Smith shared this:

"Our collaboration with DLT Trading was definitely a case of things falling into place at just the right moment. The Comanche had not been produced for nearly two years after our shop was destroyed in 2020 during Hurricane Laura. In the meantime, we had taken on DLT as a new dealer. While in discussions with DLT on what we might be able to produce to satisfy their needs, we discovered that their customers have a particular love for CPM-3V, especially in the case of fixed blades in the size range of the Comanche. We proposed producing it as an exclusive and they were happy to oblige."

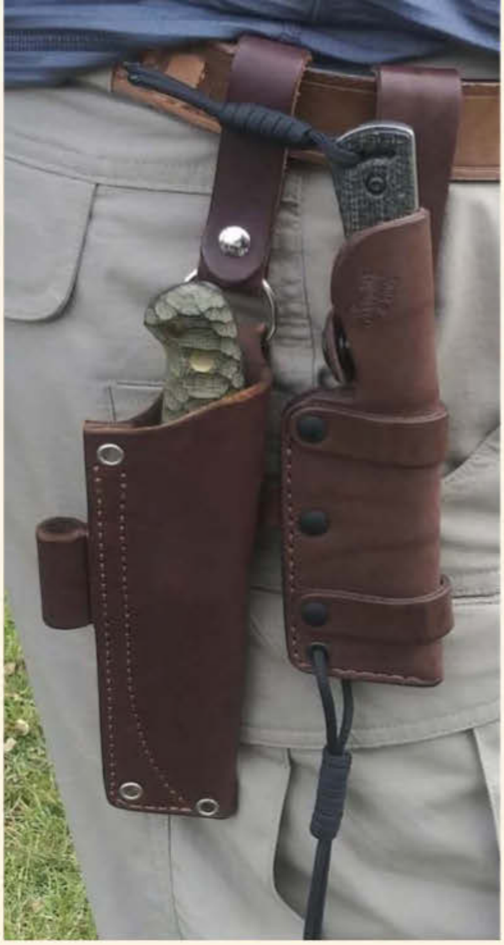
You can find the Comanche at DLTTrading.com.

⊕ SPECS

SMITH & SONS COMANCHE

Overall Length: 7.875 inches
Blade Length: 3.625 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.125 inch
Steel: 3V
Weight: 4.0 ounces
MSRP: $299

> "…I FOUND THAT THE LANYARD RUBBED AGAINST MY HAND, NO MATTER WHERE I PUT THE LANYARD LOOP."



Top, Left: Here's the difference in dangler lengths. The LT Wright GNS on the left carries much lower than the Comanche on the right.

Top, Right: Here, the Comanche sheath is threaded on the belt, which causes the knife to ride fairly high and be easy to conceal under a jacket.

Bottom, Left: An old rubber hose was hacked up in seconds and without any trouble.

Bottom, Right: Thick, abrasive rope was no challenge at all for the Comanche.

SOURCES

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DLTTrading.com

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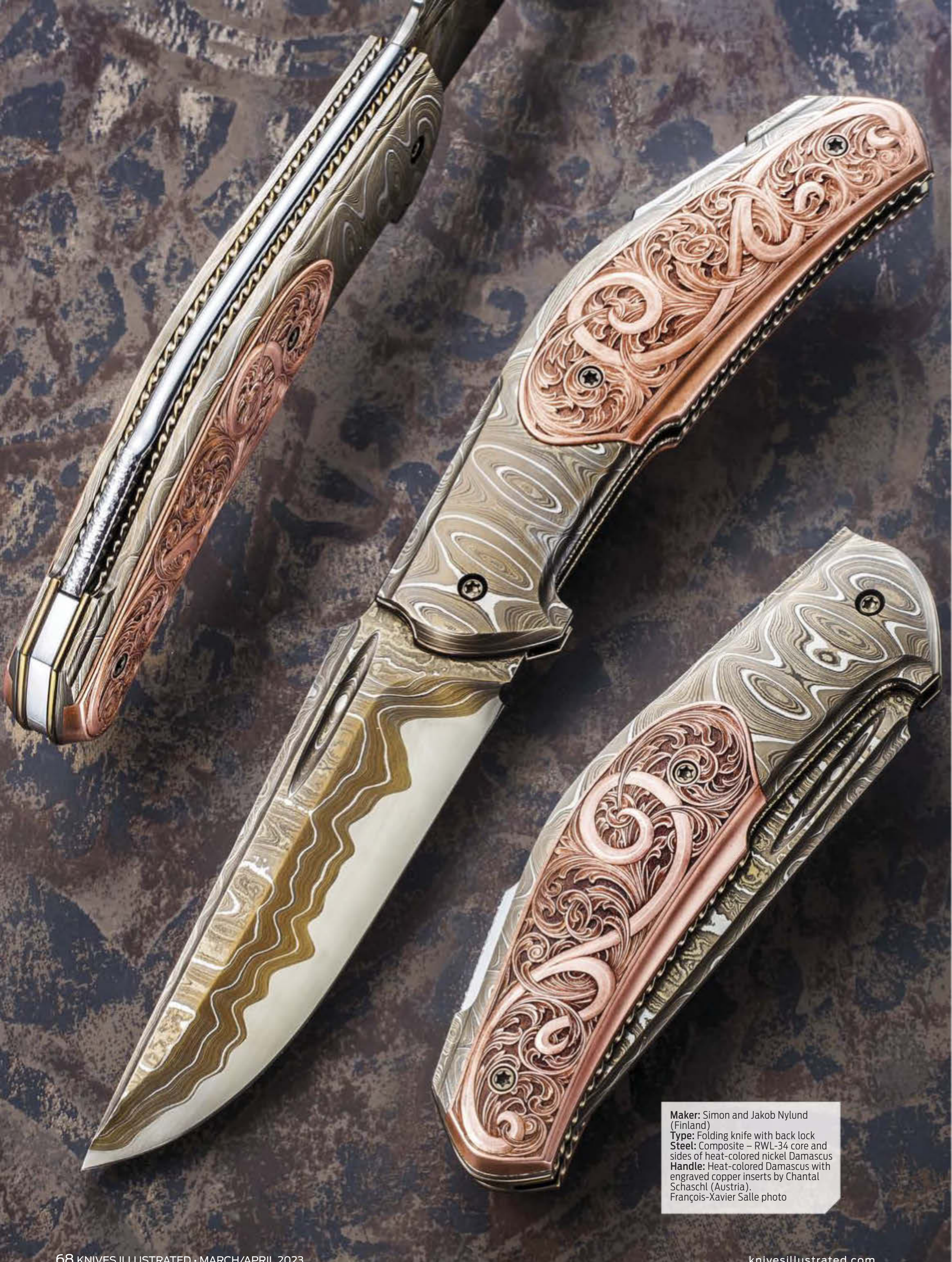


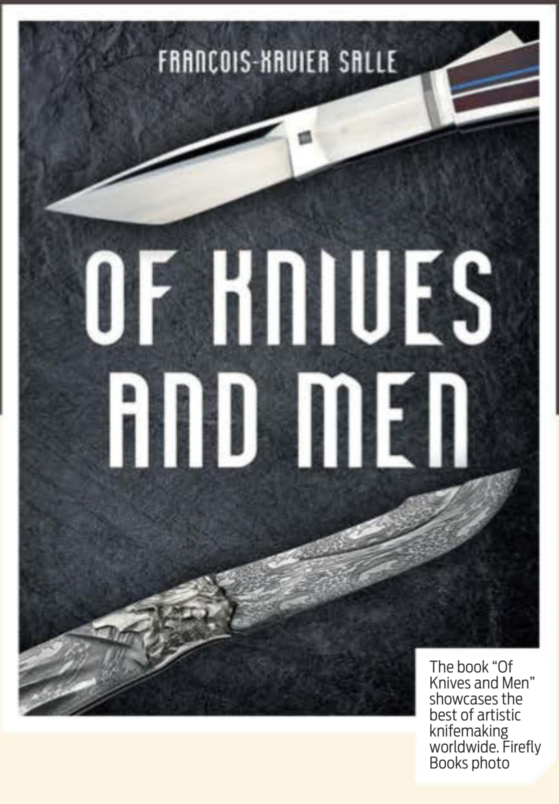
Maker: Simon and Jakob Nylund (Finland)
Type: Folding knife with back lock
Steel: Composite – RWL-34 core and sides of heat-colored nickel Damascus
Handle: Heat-colored Damascus with engraved copper inserts by Chantal Schaschl (Austria).
François-Xavier Salle photo

LOOKING SHARP

“OF KNIVES AND MEN” SHOWCASES THE STELLAR HEIGHTS OF THE KNIFEMAKING ART

STORY BY KI STAFF

ALL IMAGES FROM THE BOOK “OF KNIVES AND MEN” BY FRANÇOIS-XAVIER SALLE



The book “Of Knives and Men” showcases the best of artistic knifemaking worldwide. Firefly Books photo

From the beginning, the knife has been a more treasured, and a more personal tool than any other used by man. It has been critical in survival situations, a means of completing daily chores, an essential tool in many livelihoods and an implement of war and self-defense.

So it’s not surprising that we’ve come to revere the knife and to elevate examples of it with ornate embellishments and to pay homage to it by using it as an artistic platform to imbue it with our creative visions.

Top, Left: Maker: Haley and Adam Desrosiers (USA)
Type: Keyhole integral
Steel: Composite Damascus
Handle: Damascus steel and carbon fiber
Sheath: Reptile skin by Francesca Ritchie. Caleb Royer photo

Top, Right: Maker: Haley and Adam Desrosiers (USA)
Type: Semi-integral hunting
Steel: Twisted multi-bar Damascus
Handle: Sambar deer antlers, pommel in explosion Damascus steel. Caleb Royer photo

Left: Maker: Arpad Bojtos (Slovakia)
Type: Folding dagger with liner lock
Steel: Damascus stainless steel
Handle: Mammoth ivory, gold, silver and mother-of-pearl. Carved inlays representing Clytia and Apollo. Francesco Pachi photo

Bottom: Artistry in knifemaking is nothing new, as evidenced by this decorative stone-age knife. Yannick Kepinski photo

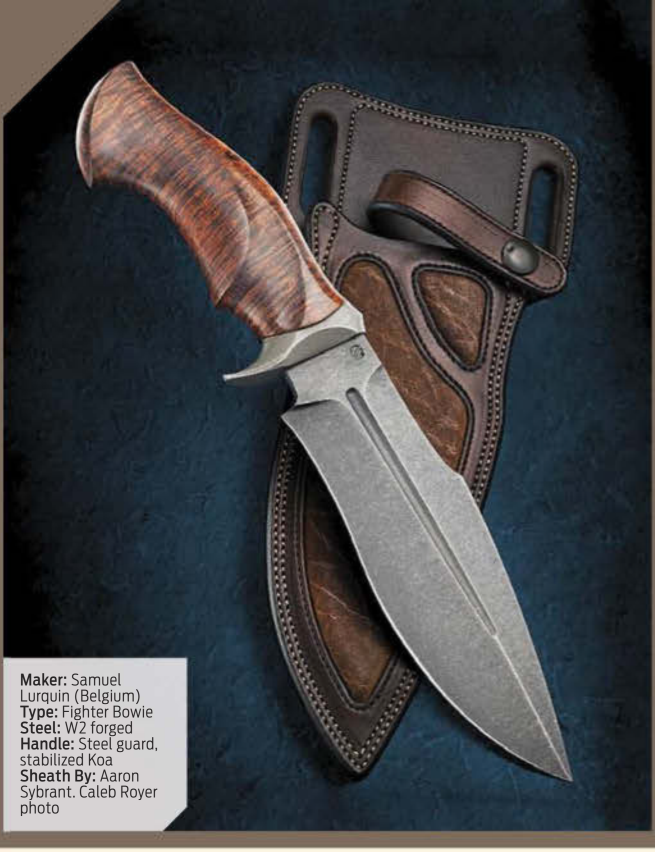
OPPOSITE PAGE

Top, Right: Maker: Jean-Louis Regel (France)
Type: Two Bowies (can be dismantled)
Steel: Twisted and explosion multi-bar Damascus with guard and pommel engraved with gold thread (left), and wootz with guard and pommel of blued steel and gold (right)
Handle: Mammoth ivory (left), and fossilized walrus ivory (right). Caleb Royer photo

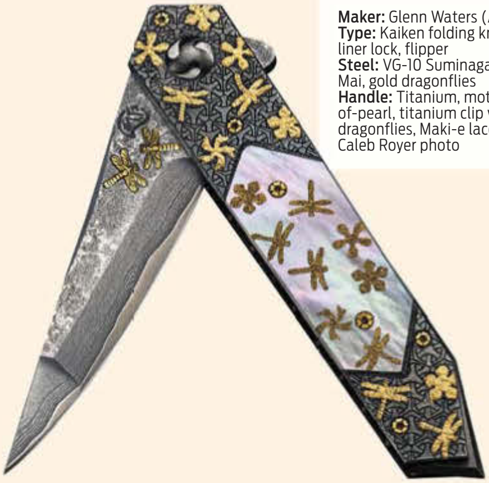
Bottom: Maker: Tony Karlsson (Sweden)
Type: Folding knife with liner lock
Steel: Mosaic Damascus (blade and bolsters)
Handle: Brown mammoth-hide scales. François-Xavier Salle photo

A 19th century folk art knife with carved wooden handle. François-Xavier Salle photo

> "'OF KNIVES AND MEN,' IS A TRIBUTE TO THOSE ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN WORLDWIDE WHO HAVE TAKEN KNIFEMAKING ARTISTRY TO GREATER HEIGHTS..."



Maker: Samuel Lurquin (Belgium)
Type: Fighter Bowie
Steel: W2 forged
Handle: Steel guard, stabilized Koa
Sheath By: Aaron Sybrant. Caleb Royer photo



Maker: Glenn Waters (Australia)
Type: Kaiken folding knife with liner lock, flipper
Steel: VG-10 Suminagashi San Mai, gold dragonflies
Handle: Titanium, mother-of-pearl, titanium clip with dragonflies, Maki-e lacquer. Caleb Royer photo

THE DETAILS

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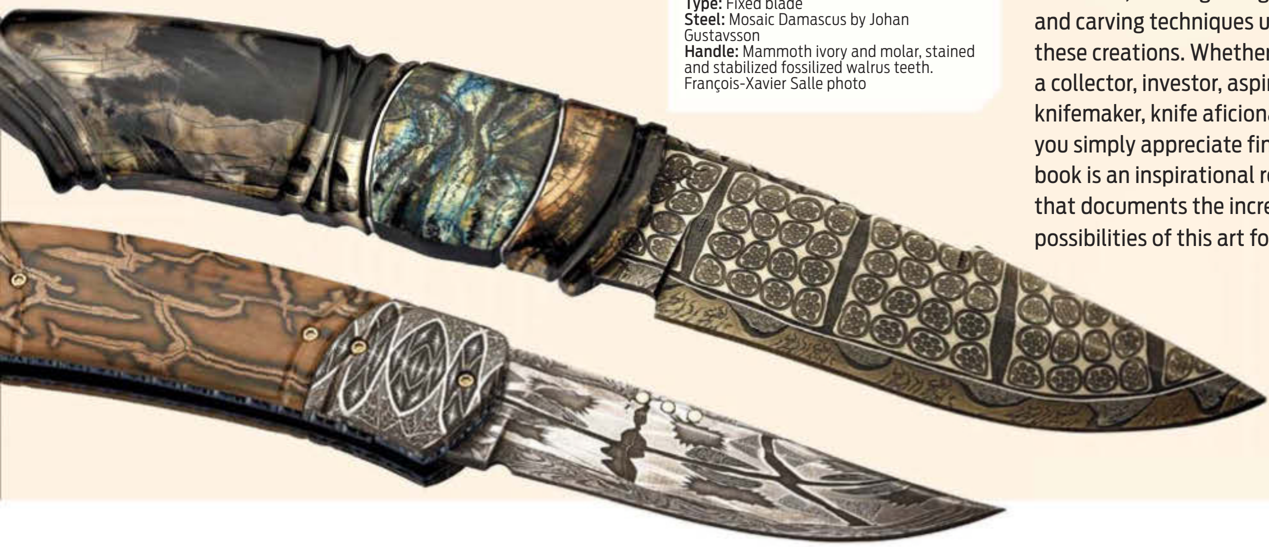
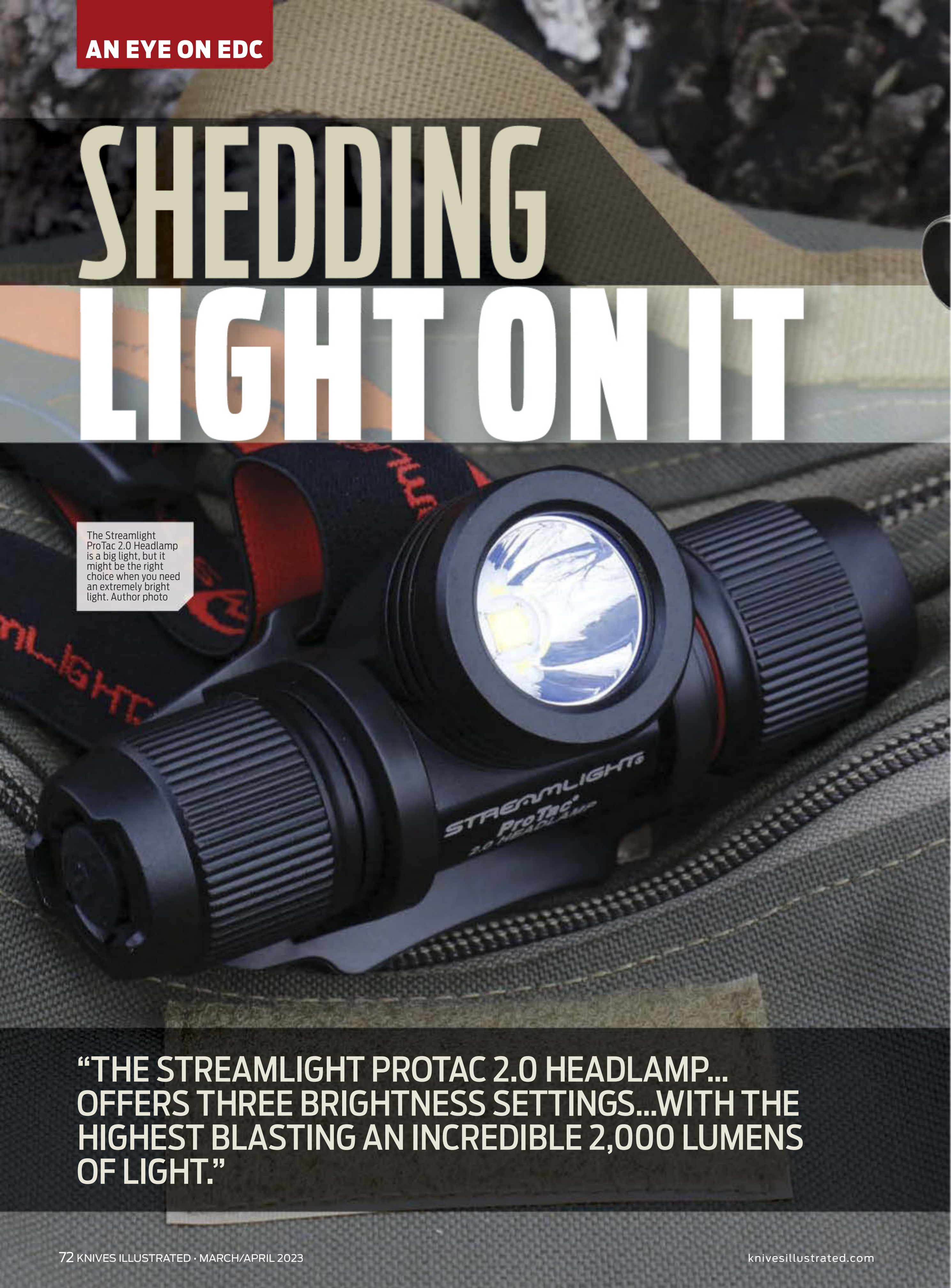
"Of Knives and Men" is a tribute to those artists and craftsmen worldwide who have taken knifemaking artistry to greater heights using innovative materials and modern techniques. This 240-page hardcover book by François-Xavier Salle and published by Firefly Books features the work of 46 artisans covering the past 30 years. It showcases 217 knives and sheaths with full-color photographs, specifications, and profiles of the makers.

There's a section at the end of the book detailing handle materials, and engraving, etching and carving techniques used in these creations. Whether you're a collector, investor, aspiring knifemaker, knife aficionado, or you simply appreciate fine art, this book is an inspirational resource that documents the incredible possibilities of this art form. **KI**



Maker: Thomas and Claes Löfgren (Sweden)
Type: Fixed blade
Steel: Mosaic Damascus by Johan Gustavsson
Handle: Mammoth ivory and molar, stained and stabilized fossilized walrus teeth. François-Xavier Salle photo

SHEDDING LIGHT ON IT


STREAMLIGHT
ProTac
2.0 HEADLAMP
STREAMLIGHT

The Streamlight ProTac 2.0 Headlamp is a big light, but it might be the right choice when you need an extremely bright light. Author photo

> “THE STREAMLIGHT PROTAC 2.0 HEADLAMP... OFFERS THREE BRIGHTNESS SETTINGS...WITH THE HIGHEST BLASTING AN INCREDIBLE 2,000 LUMENS OF LIGHT.”

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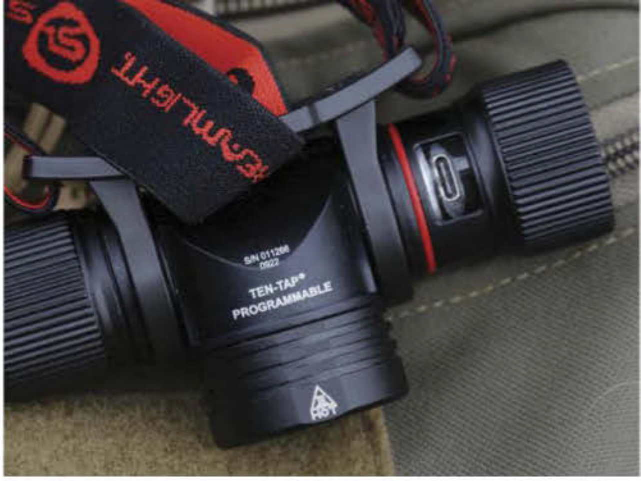

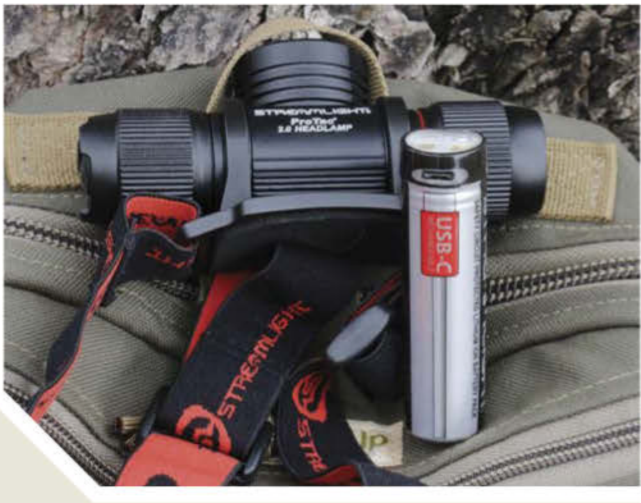

STREAMLIGHT'S MANY CARRY-WORTHY FLASHLIGHTS AND HEADLAMPS

BY STEVEN PAUL BARLOW

Considering all the things I insist on carrying on a daily basis, the item I probably use more often than any other is a flashlight. I always carry a flashlight, a real one. I don't use my Zippo lighter as a flashlight as they do in the movies, and I rarely use the light on the back of my smartphone, as I'm lucky enough not have the phone permanently glued to my hand yet.

There's no doubt this carry habit when it comes to flashlights is the result of my years as a police officer when I worked more nights than not. Although I'm no longer in uniform, I still find times day and night when I seem to need a light.

STREAMLIGHT
ProTac 90
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I retrieve the light from my pocket whenever I need to spot something in a cluttered junk drawer. I also need a light when I dare to explore the dark recesses of a closet, the basement or the garage at my house. Did I just drop something under my car seat? I'll probably need a light to find it. Because I'm still armed most of the time, I need a light I can use with my firearm so that there are no mistakes when things go bump in the night.

But just as the particular firearm, knife and other EDC item might change depending on what I can foresee for the day ahead, so too does my choice of light change from time to time. That's possible because these days there is no shortage of good lights that are smaller, brighter and have longer runtimes than anything I used as a cop years ago.

While there are great lights being offered by several companies, one brand seems to pop up more often than any other when I pick up a light, and that's Streamlight. Most recently, I've been trying out the company's new ProTac 2.0 Headlamp.

LOOK MA, NO HANDS

Days when I'm trapped in a town, city or other area ruined beyond hope by mankind, I normally carry a small handheld light in a pocket. Off pavement, however, my choice is often a headlamp. Having my hands free on the trail or in camp is a big benefit. The ability to have both hands free comes in handy around the house, too, when I need to light up something I'm struggling to assemble or repair.

Above: The new SL-B50 Lithium-Ion rechargeable battery powers the headlamp with its 4,900mAh of energy. Author photo

Top, Left: The Streamlight Microstream USB is the author's go-to light for everyday carry. Streamlight photo

Top, Right: A sliding sleeve on the Streamlight ProTac 2.0 Headlamp provides access to the battery's USB-C charging port. Author photo

Bottom, Left: The ProTac 90 can be powered by either a single CR-123 lithium or a single AA battery. Streamlight photo

The Streamlight ProTac 2.0 Headlamp is one powerhouse of a light. In its default setting, it offers three brightness settings—high, medium and low—with the highest blasting an incredible 2,000 lumens of light. Still impressive are the medium setting at 650 lumens and the low setting at 110 lumens.

The runtimes are impressive, too, at 2.5 hours, 4.5 hours and 25 hours, respectively, for those three brightness settings. Those runtimes are possible thanks to Streamlight's new SL-B50 Lithium-Ion USB-C rechargeable battery that stores 4,900mAh of energy.

A sliding sleeve on the light gives you access to a USB-C charging port so that you can charge the

STREAMLIGHT
ENDURO PRO
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STREAMLIGHT
MACROSTREAM USB

light without removing the battery. However, there is a charging port in the battery itself, so if you picked up an extra battery, you could use your light with one battery while charging the other. There are LED status lights to indicate charging status, including red for charging and green for fully charged. A USB-C charge cord is included.

This light features the company's Ten-Tap programmable system. Tap the light switch 10 times and you can switch the sequence from the default high-medium-low to high-only to low-high. I'll keep mine in the default mode. I like having the highest mode first should I need to identify a threat in a hurry. But I know I'll use the lowest mode most often, which provides more than enough light for most uses while saving as much of the battery power as possible for when I really need the maximum brightness.

The ProTac 2.0 Headlamp features a sturdy aluminum body with a black anodized finish. The light rotates up and down within the headband bracket, so you can direct the light right where you need it. The light comes with both an adjustable elastic head strap that fits comfortably over the head, and a rubber hard-hat strap to keep the light firmly in place.

Providing that amazing 2,000 lumens of light comes at a price. For one, in the brightest mode, the LED lamp gets quite warm. The other thing is that this light is a beast. It weighs 10.48 ounces with the battery installed. It measures nearly 5 inches wide and more than 2.5 inches thick. The head diameter is 1.46 inches. When I first put it on, my initial reaction was that it was simply too big and too heavy. But I became used to it in short order and it really was quite comfortable. The headband does a good job of distributing the weight and keeping the light stable.

What all this means is that this light won't be the EDC choice for everyone. I don't think it was intended to be. But first responders, those on search and rescue teams, construction and industrial workers—anyone who needs a super-bright light—might very well find this headlamp's high performance to be just what they need. And while it might be too heavy for ultralight backpackers, it certainly will light up a poorly marked trail at night and will help to reassure you that the rustling in the bushes isn't a bear.

The MSRP of this light is $195 and it comes with Streamlight's Limited Lifetime Warranty.

OTHER MODELS

I will certainly get lots of good use out of this headlamp, but I'm not turning my back on the other Streamlight products I've come to trust over the years. For headlamps, I regularly use the rechargeable Enduro Pro USB, the regular AAA Enduro Pro and the Bandit Pro.

Among my favorite Streamlight handheld lights for everyday carry are the Microstream USB, Macrostream USB, ProTac 90, Pocket Mate and the Wedge. The Microstream USB is about the size of my pinky finger. There are two brightness levels (250 and 50 lumens) and it's my go-to light for EDC whenever I don't need something more specialized.

I have a tiny Pocket Mate on each of my key chains so that I always have one available as a backup light. The ProTac 90 is a small light with right-angle head and pocket clip. It features the versatility of being able to use either a CR-123 battery or an AA.

Like the knives we carry, no one flashlight is best for all purposes. But this selection of Streamlight products gives you plenty of options when you need to master the darkness. **KI**

Top, Left: The author has used his Enduro Pro USB light extensively. Author photo

Top, Right: The Macrostream USB rechargeable is about 4.5 inches long and 0.83 inch in diameter. It's an excellent EDC light. Author photo

Bottom, Left: The Wedge's shape makes it a good option for pocket carry. It supplies 300 lumens of light with an available momentary Turbo blast of 1,000 lumens. Streamlight photo

Bottom, Right: The Pocket Mate has a clip to mount the light on the brim of a hat and a spring-loaded carabiner to attach it to a key chain or pack strap. Streamlight photo

STREAMLIGHT
WEDGE

POCKET MATE

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THE BLADED HAND

SHARPEN YOUR PERSONAL PROTECTION WITH EFFECTIVE UNARMED DEFENSE AGAINST A KNIFE

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY PATRICK VUONG

Knives both fascinate and frighten me. Aside from all the amazing functions they can perform, edged tools are quite deadly. To put it bluntly, blades can ventilate, lacerate, eviscerate, and decapitate.

And those are some pretty big reasons why I have spent the past 25 years continuously studying personal protection and (particularly in the last seven years) edged-weapon defense.

AMBUSH TACTICS

Movies, TV shows, and pop culture have given us a false sense of reality when it comes to bladed attacks. They're often portrayed as duels, with the hero facing off against a villain who twirls his knife before launching into a beautifully choreographed action scene.

The truth is the vast majority of knifing victims don't even realize they're being stabbed; they think they're being punched.

> “THE TRUTH IS THE VAST MAJORITY OF KNIFING VICTIMS DON’T EVEN REALIZE THEY’RE BEING STABBED; THEY THINK THEY’RE BEING PUNCHED.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A frequent contributor to Knives Illustrated, Patrick Vuong is a lifelong "knife knut" whose first edged tool was a Swiss Army Knife given to him as a gift when he was 8 years old. He's a certified handgun instructor as well as a teacher of several self-defense systems, including the blade art of Pekiti-Tirsia Kali.

Moreover, Vuong is also the co-founder of Tiga Tactics, a combatives training company. To learn more about effective edged-weapon training, go to KnifeDefenseTraining.com.

Above: Thanks to Hollywood action scenes, most people assume that they can stop a knife attack because they'll see it coming and have time to either flee, fight or draw their own weapon.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Top, Right: But the scary truth is that most knife attacks are actually knife ambushes—the blade is often hidden until it comes out at bad-breath distance with almost no warning.

Bottom, Right: Protecting yourself from a bladed ambush is the first priority. Here the author demonstrates at a recent seminar how the Low Shield (a hybrid of the traditional low block and the X block) can not only stop a linear stab when combined with footwork, but can also trap the attacker's arm and take his leverage away.

That's because criminals and the criminally insane are not trained martial artists. They are two-legged predators who often hide their weapon until the last possible second, search for unsuspecting prey, and pounce as quickly as possible so they don't get injured or captured.

Having watched real-life knife attacks captured on CCTV and cellphone videos since 2005, I discovered that the majority of knife fights aren't fights at all—they're knife ambushes.

And once I teamed up with my cousin Dr. Conrad Bui to form a combatives training company called Tiga Tactics, we traded notes from our combined decades of research to find that we've come to the same conclusions about edged-weapon assaults.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER (AND SURVIVAL)

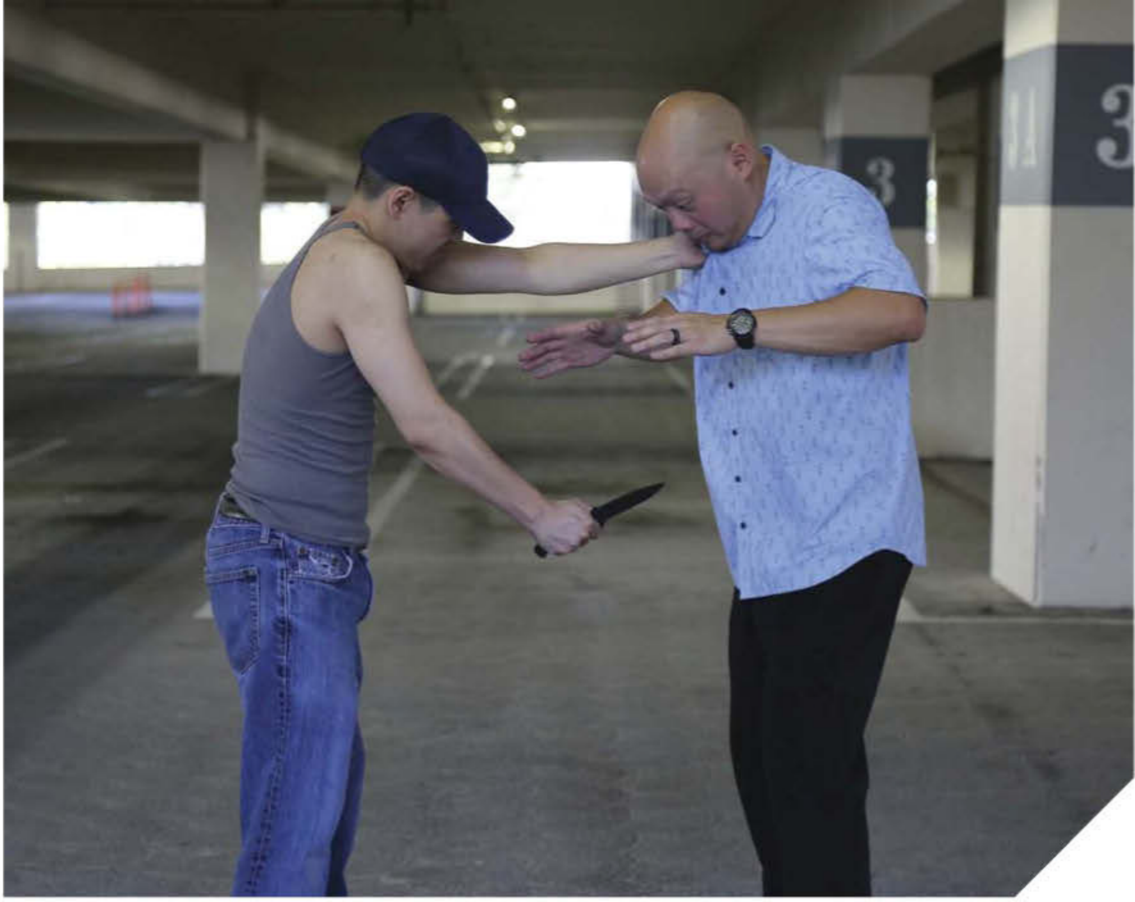
Out of the hundreds and hundreds (possibly more than a thousand) videos of violent assaults that Conrad and I have reviewed, few of them showed knife duels. Of course, knife-versus-knife fights do happen, but they are not as common as you may think.

What's far more common is a thug (who appears to be unarmed) getting within 3 feet—we call it "bad-breath distance"—and either harassing, grabbing or punching another person. Then, in a flash, the criminal will draw his or her hidden blade and stab the victim repeatedly. Over and over. Like a piston.

Generally, the edged weapon will come from the attacker's right hand toward the victim's center line or left side. Why? Because about 90% of humans are right-handed, according to an Oxford University study. Why is any of this relevant to empty-hand defense against a knife? Because you can't formulate a realistic solution unless you have an authentic picture of what the problem is.

Many traditional martial arts, combat sports and even so-called reality-based self-defense systems teach defenses against hypothetical knife assaults. But reality will always beat theory; these counterattacks fall apart once we pressure-test them at full speed and full power against a resistant partner with a training knife.

Heck, even the gun owner's classic response of "I'll just shoot 'em" doesn't necessarily hold water. Sure, maybe you're a modern-day Doc Holliday and can draw your handgun from concealment and get a few rounds off within two seconds. But remember, the majority of knife attacks are knife ambushes that happen within 3 feet. At that range, it's going to be



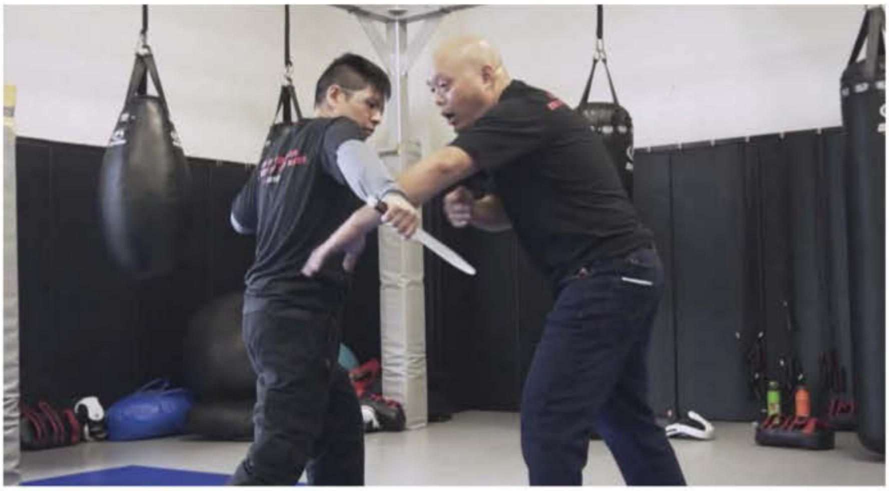
a trade—your shots might kill the knife-wielder instantly, but you might bleed out later from severe stab wounds.

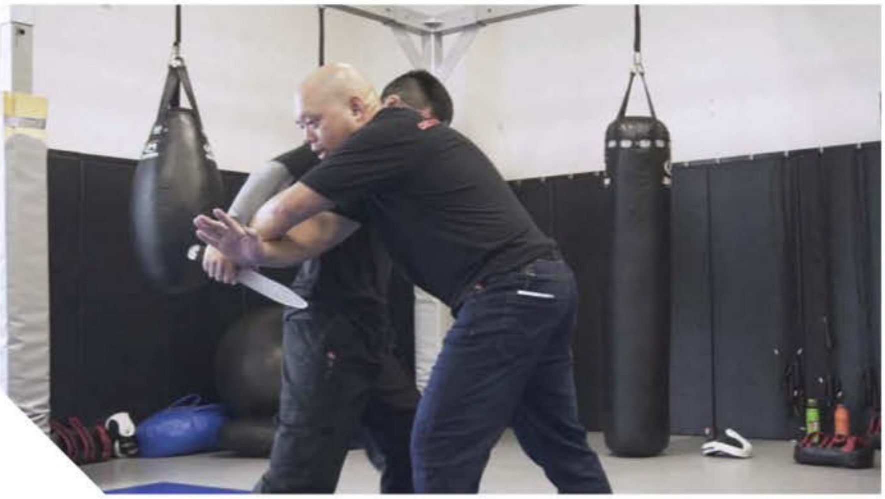
Most bladed ambushes happen so quickly and at such short ranges that protecting yourself must be the priority. That's why Conrad and I created the Tiga Tactics P.R.O. System—which stands for Protection, Reposition and Offense.

PROTECTION IS THE PRIORITY

The most advanced form of knife defense is avoiding the attack altogether. That means living a defensive lifestyle, staying as humble as possible to avoid conflict and maintaining mindfulness to stay aware of potential dangers.

But, let's say you've done all the right things and you're still unlucky enough to be confronted by a knife-wielding goon. What should you do? "Run!" according to a lot of self-defense experts. Sure, that will work. But what if you're with your three young kids?





Do you expect them to sprint after you? Or maybe you're stuck in an elevator with the maniac? What then?

As the P.R.O. System implies, the first priority is to protect yourself. How exactly? Well, because we've done years of research, we've realized that most untrained criminals will attack in predictable ways: If they have a reverse grip, it'll be the Psycho Stab (named as an homage to the Hitchcock movie "Psycho"), and if they have a forward grip, it'll be the Sewing Machine (named for the repetitive linear thrusts).

Understanding these natural human instincts dramatically narrows down your defensive responses, which is a good thing. As Hick's Law tells us, having too many options increases the time it takes to make a decision—which could be fatal in the middle of a knife ambush. So, we essentially have two defensive moves: the Low Shield for the Sewing Machine and the High Shield for the Psycho Stab.

The Low Shield is a modification of an ancient technique, what traditional martial arts would call a low block or a down block. The aim is for the middle of your left forearm bone to intercept the middle of your opponent's right forearm bone (and vice versa if the attacker is left-handed), thereby stopping the stabbing motion.

It's modified because we've added in the support arm to act as both a secondary block and, more importantly, as a trap. Some martial artists might look at this and say, "That's just a useless X block." But the difference is twofold: 1) Your left forearm is doing most of the blocking, unlike in an X block in which the arms split the duties evenly, and 2) You use footwork to get closer.

That might seem counterintuitive, but every time the attacker draws back to attempt another stab, you must step forward while maintaining the Low Shield. This takes away their power and leverage, because the more they rechamber, the more you trap their arm with forward pressure.

When you're defending against a Psycho Stab, you essentially do the Low Shield but above your shoulders, hence, High Shield. The concepts are the same though: Block the middle of the bad guy's forearm bone with the middle of your forearm bone, use your support arm to trap his limb, and use your footwork to take away his balance, strength and leverage.

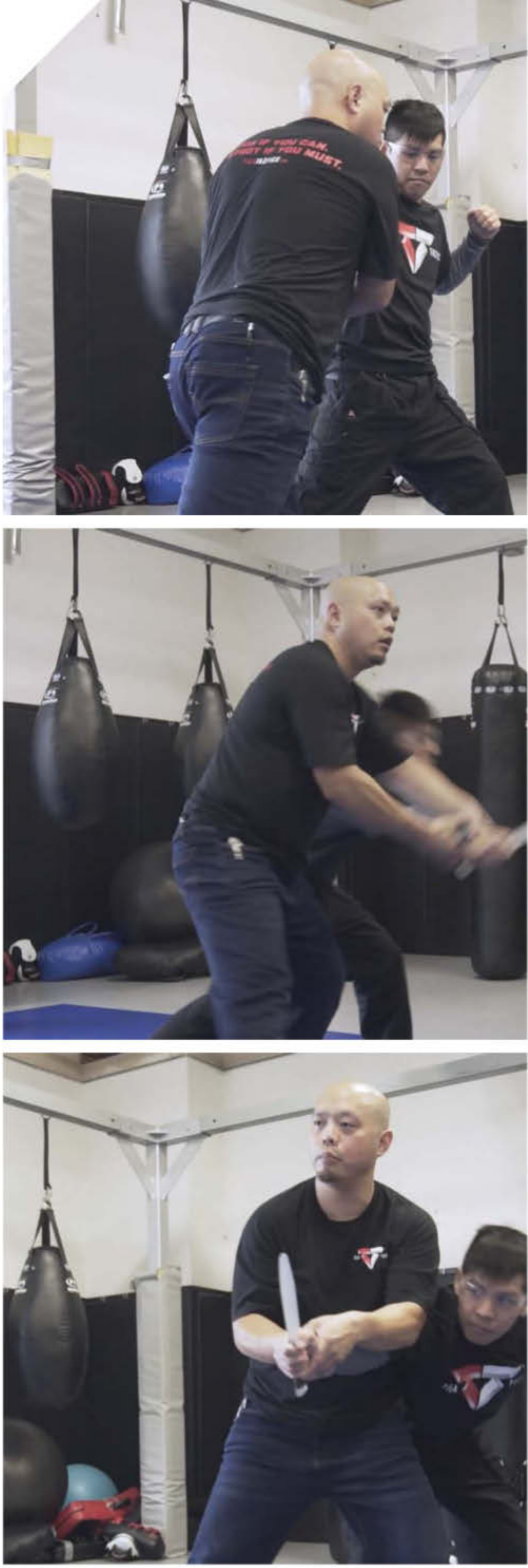
REPOSITION TO A SAFER SPOT

We want to get past the knife and keep it away from us. That's where the R in P.R.O. comes into play. It stands for "reposition" or "restrain"—as in, move yourself to a safer spot and hold the bad guy in place.

To do this against the Sewing Machine, you'll pivot your body as your attacker attempts to thrust forward to get out of your Low Shield trap. This will allow the weapon to go past your body while extending his arm straight. As you do this, you'll slide your hands down to his wrist, grabbing it like a knot at the end of a rope. You'll also want to press your shoulder against his and face the same direction, ensuring that the knife is not pointed at you.

Last but not least, you'll want to drop your weight as much as possible to disrupt his balance and ability to pull his arm back.

From the High Shield against the Psycho Stab, you'll rotate your arms until you can slide your hands down to his wrist, again grabbing it like a knot at the end of a rope. This time around, you'll



Right: After protecting himself with the Low Shield, author Patrick Vuong pivots his upper body just as the attacker attempts to thrust forward and free his knife hand. He uses that momentum against his opponent and locks in a two-on-one grip on the wrist, as well as an overhook on the arm.

be facing your opponent, but the blade should be pointed at him, making it a safer spot to be. Next, drop your weight and keep his arm straightened.

Of course, the fight is not over—far from it. That's why, after you've established your new position and restrained the bad guy, if even for a second, it's time to shift to the last phase.

K.I.S.S. OFFENSE: KEEP IT STRONG AND SIMPLE

Your retaliation should do as much damage as possible in the shortest amount of time. So, we keep our offensive tools as simple and powerful as possible.

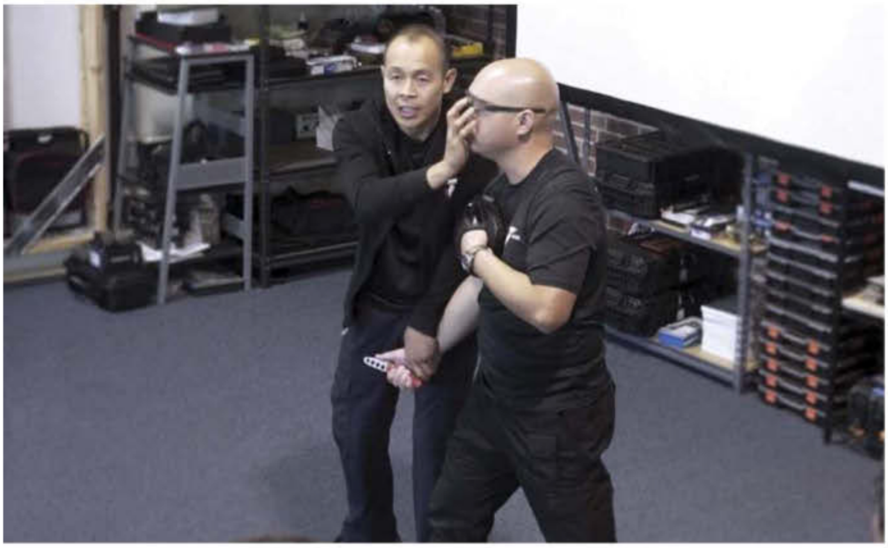
The first strike really isn't a strike at all but rather just a move. It's called the Eye Wash, and it's not to be confused with an eye jab or an eye gouge.

The difference is that the Eye Wash is not a linear strike like the eye jab, or a squeezing or hooking motion like the eye gouge. You simply extend your loose hand as if you're holding a wash cloth or softball and jam whatever fingers you can into the eyes. The advantage of the Eye Wash is that you're unlikely to damage your fingers yet you can easily control the head, allowing you to follow up with more devastating attacks, such as the Palm Strike.

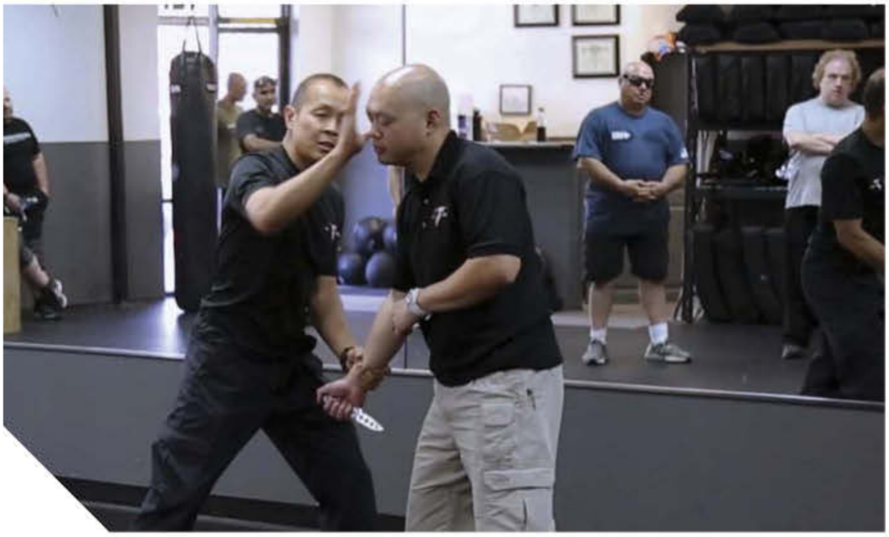
I advocate for the Palm Strike over a punch because the former delivers just as much knockout power as the latter, but you won't risk breaking your hand. And the last thing you want to do in a knife fight is lose the use of a primary tool.

Another fantastic counteroffensive is the elbow strike and its variations, including horizontal, vertical and reverse. The elbow strike is my favorite empty-hand weapon because it delivers tremendous power but it's almost impossible to hurt yourself when using it.

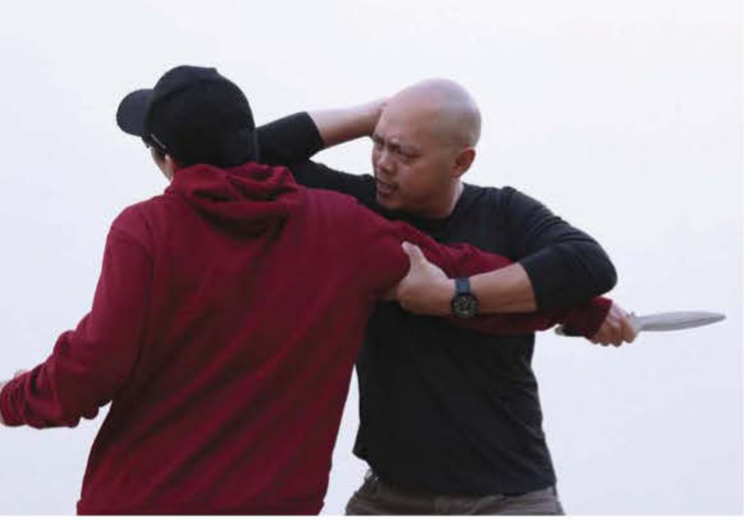
And much like its upper-body counterpart, the knee strike can also do some serious damage to a bad guy. It can crush testicles, break ribs and of course knock people unconscious. Simply put, it's a fight-ender.

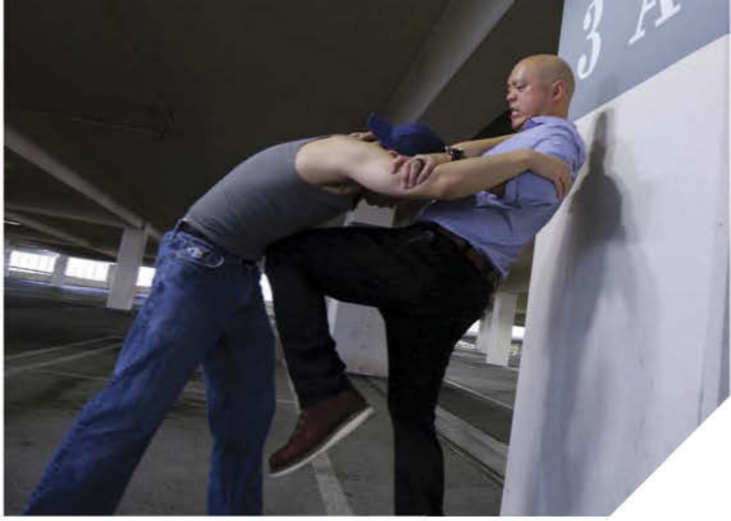


Left: The Eye Wash is not an eye jab or eye gouge. It's not about power but rather placement. Simply place your loose hand on the attacker's face and let your fingers jam into their eyes. This move also lets you control the head for follow-up strikes.

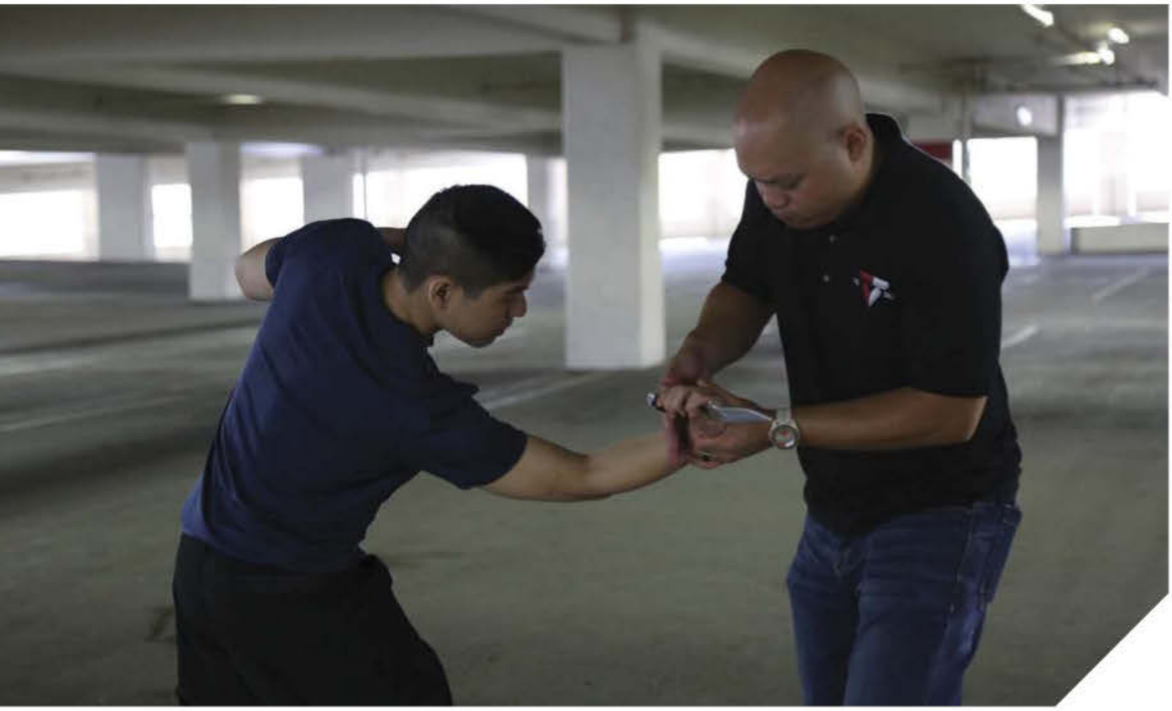


Bottom, Left: The Palm Strike is much safer than throwing a punch because it delivers just as much knockout power but won't put you at risk of breaking your hand.





“YOUR RETALIATION SHOULD DO AS MUCH DAMAGE AS POSSIBLE IN THE SHORTEST AMOUNT OF TIME.”



Top, Left: The Vertical Elbow Strike and its variations like the Horizontal Elbow and Reverse Elbow can be a fight-ender. And the best part is that it’s unlikely to injure the user.

Top, Right: The Knee Strike can be used to crush the groin, break ribs, smash teeth and rattle brains. All effective ways to stop a knife-wielding assailant.

Left: Many traditional martial arts, combat sports and even so-called reality-based self-defense systems teach disarms as a go-to defense against a knife attack. This is extremely risky because there’s nothing stopping the assailant from moving or pulling the blade back.

CUTTING-EDGE CONCLUSION

As you might have noticed, I didn’t discuss knife disarms at all. That’s because attempting to take away a blade from a violent criminal intent on taking your life is a fool’s errand. Many martial arts teach disarms as the primary defense against an edged-weapon attack, but those only work in the dojo because they require a compliant partner. On the streets, a murderer is not going to freeze to let you do a fancy technique.

Disarms do work … but only after you’ve tenderized the attacker with multiple, painful strikes. That’s why you should first protect yourself, reposition to a safer spot and restrain the bad guy, and then fire a violent counteroffensive until they release the weapon or are immobilized or unconscious—at which point disarming him becomes much easier to do.

Ultimately, carrying a knife without thinking about the consequences of what a blade can do to your body is kind of like driving a convertible with the top down and without a seatbelt: The chances of an incident are low, but if it does happen, it’ll probably be devastating (and potentially fatal).

So, the more you acknowledge the dangers of a blade and study what knife attacks are most common, the more effective you’ll be at knowing how to survive and, ultimately, stopping a deadly edged-weapon ambush. **KI**

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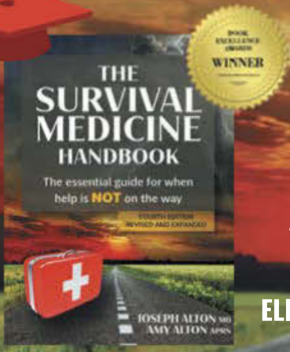

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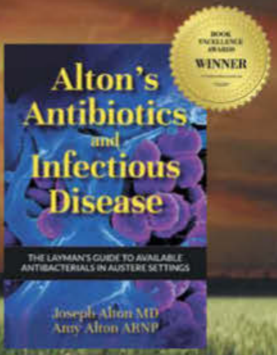

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